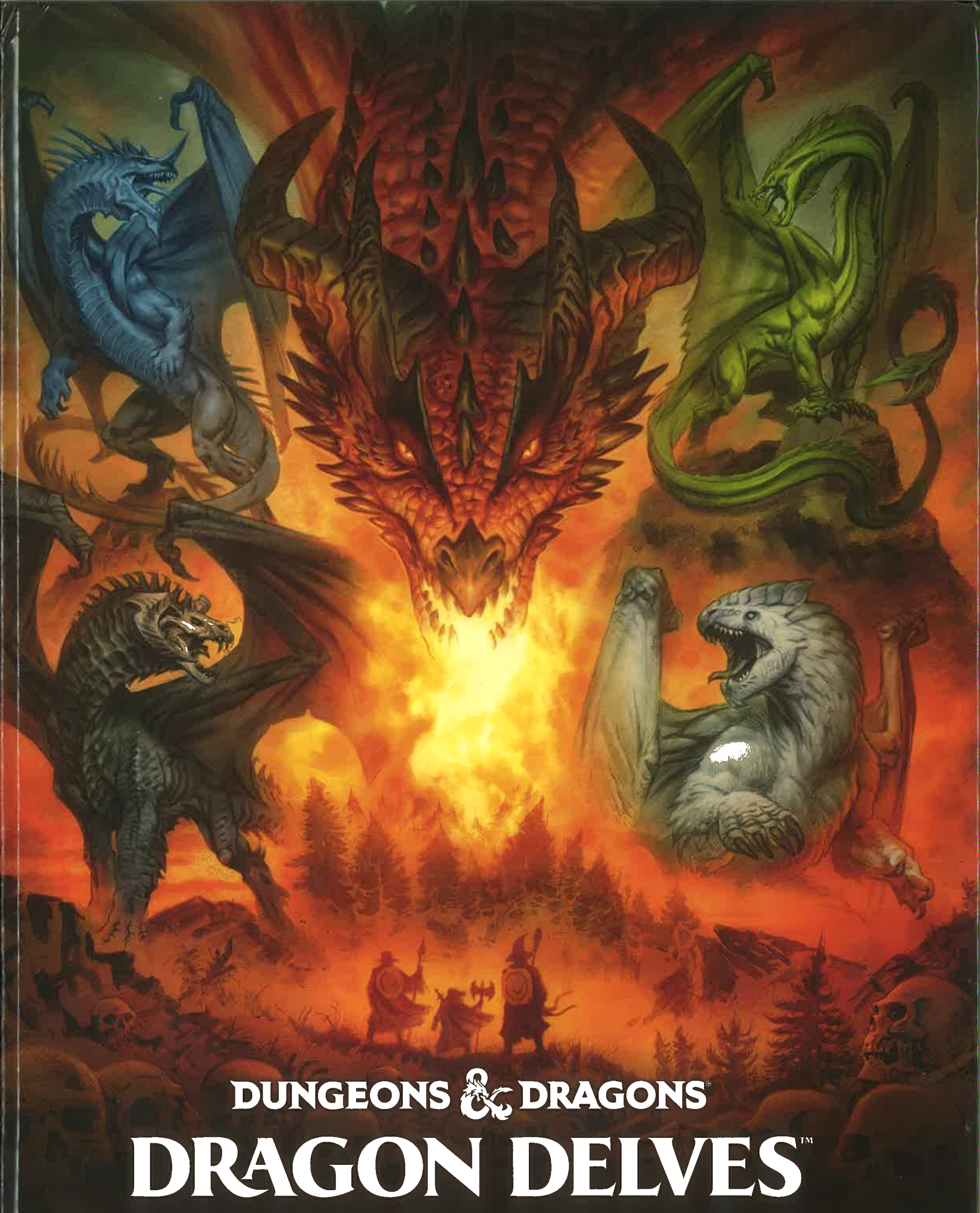
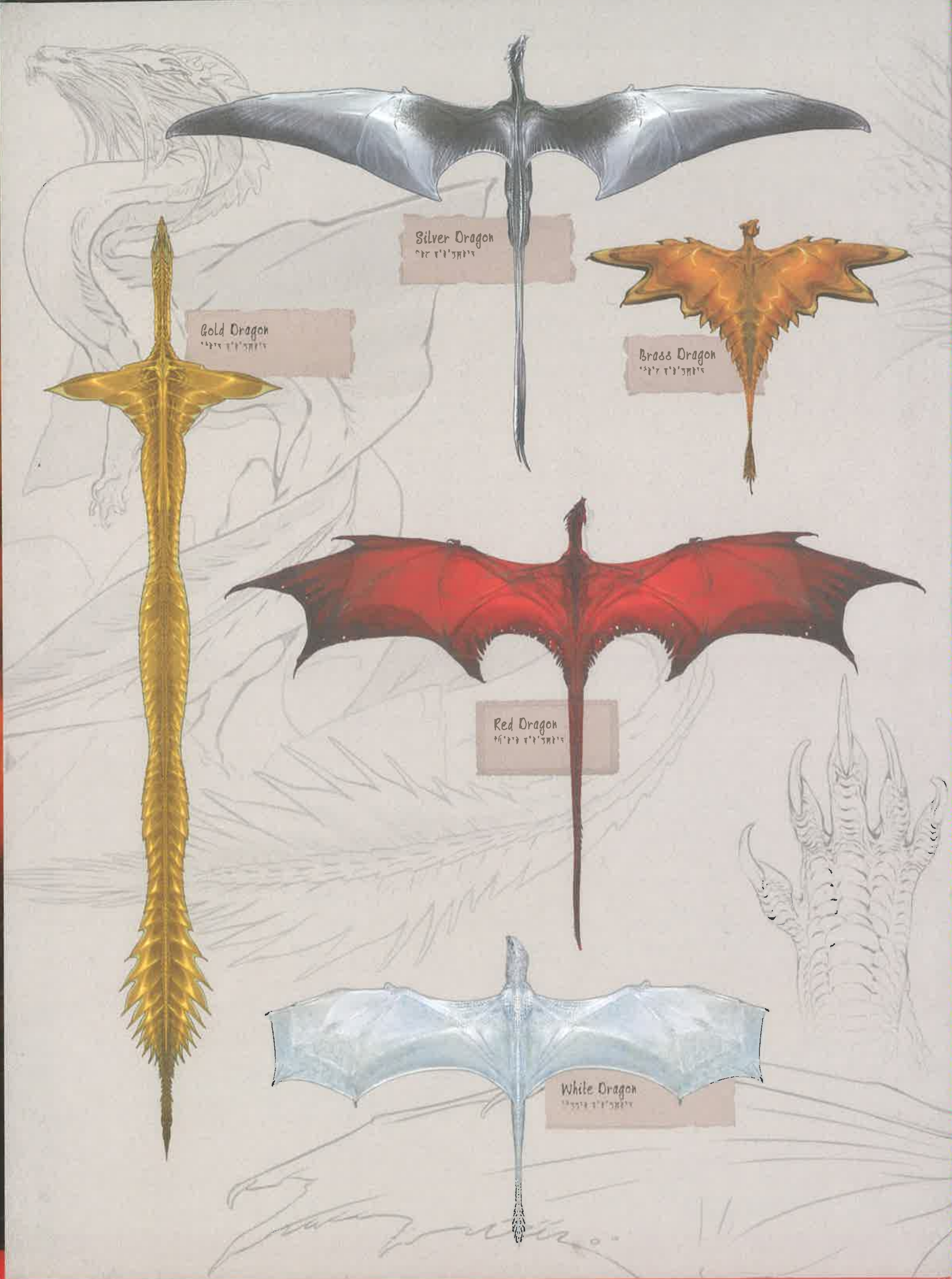
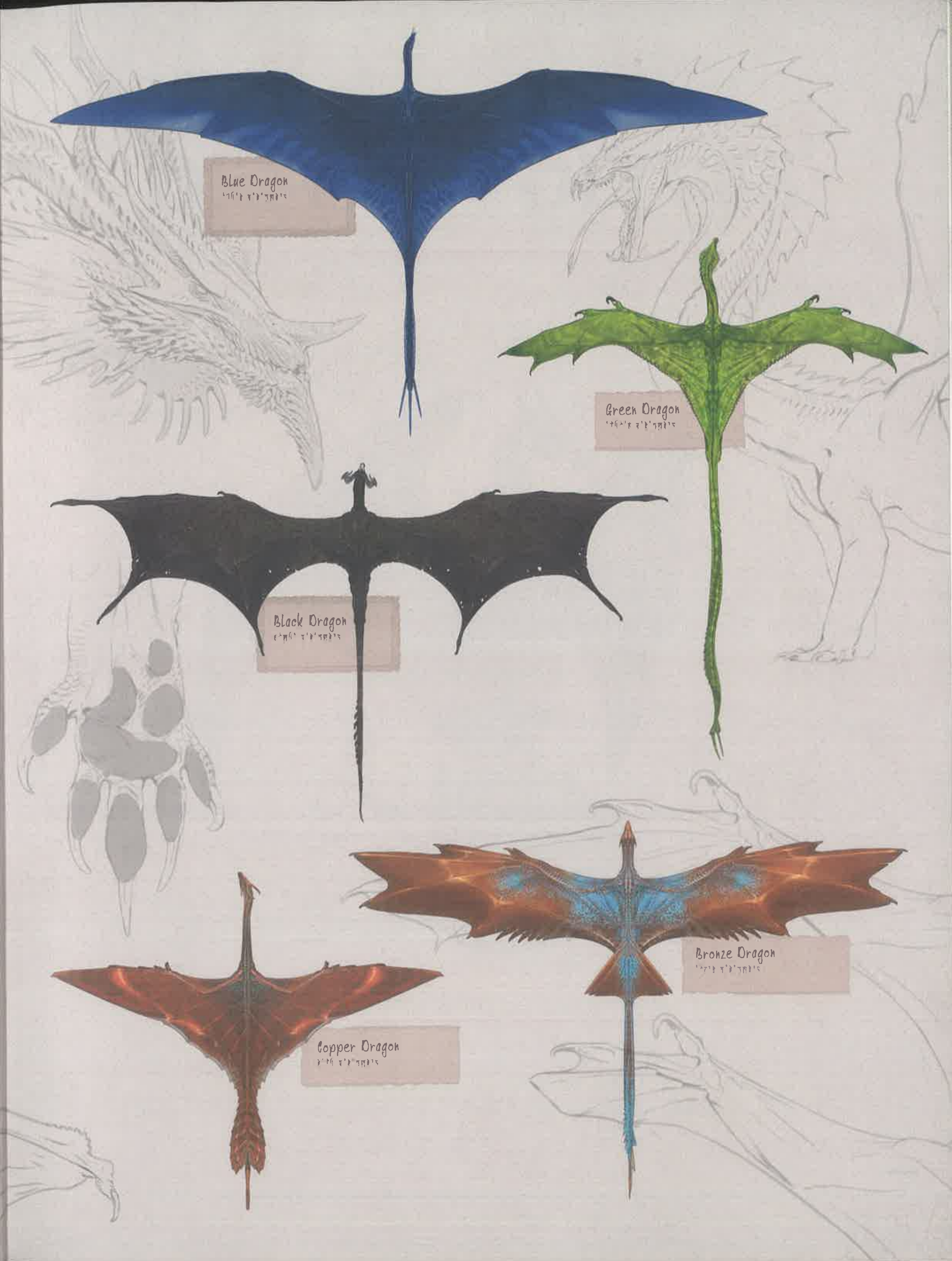


DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

DRAGON DELVES™

ADVENTURE ANTHOLOGY


Silver Dragon
Gold Dragon
Brass Dragon
Red Dragon
White Dragon


Blue Dragon
Green Dragon
Black Dragon
Bronze Dragon
Copper Dragon

DRAGON DELVES™

CHRIS RALLIS

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This book is dedicated to Christopher Perkins for his decades of contributions to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

ON THE COVER
Three brave adventurers face the unknown dangers presented by the five kinds of chromatic dragons in this dramatic poster image by Greg Staples.

ON THE ALT-COVER
Justine Jones presents a psychedelic scene of dragon-filled dreams.

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ALEXANDER OSTROWSKI

Dragons in Dungeons

NOTHING IS MORE QUINTESSENTIALLY DUNGEONS & DRAGONS than gathering a group of heroes to face a mighty dragon in a mysterious dungeon. These classic elements link players across time and space, from the first adventurers who forayed into the gloom more than 50 years ago to players beginning their first adventure now.

Dragon Delves is a celebration of this shared tradition. Each of the ten adventures in this book features a dragon in a lair. Designed for characters of levels 1 through 12, the adventures offer a range of challenges, from defeating evil dragons to working with good dragons, as well as navigating more complicated moral dilemmas. The dungeons where the dragons make their lairs range from cavern complexes to ruined cities and more.

Where there are dragons in dungeons, there's always adventure!

Using This Book

The adventures in an anthology such as *Dragon Delves* are versatile resources that can fill a variety of needs at your gaming table: as one-shot adventures, as "filler episodes" in an ongoing campaign, or as a series that forms a campaign, bringing characters from level 1 to a climactic conclusion at level 12.

These adventures are designed to require minimal preparation (see "Running the Adventures" later in this introduction).

One-Shot Adventure

Maybe you're normally a player in an ongoing campaign, but you want to try your hand at being the Dungeon Master. Maybe you're trying to pull a new group together, and you want to see how all the players get along before you start a whole campaign. Maybe your regular DM is sick or has a scheduling conflict, but everyone else is ready to play. Or maybe your group needs a break or a diversion from the ongoing campaign. In any of these cases, you can pick an adventure from this book and run it.

In an Ongoing Campaign

Maybe your players' characters know what they have to do to foil the evil boss's plans, but they're not quite high enough level to accomplish their goal. Or they've just hit a significant milestone in the campaign, and you want to give them a change of pace before they get immersed in the next act of the unfolding drama. Or they're traveling halfway around the world, and you're looking for something to keep the journey interesting—a little adventure along the way. Or you're not prepared for the next adventure, and you need a diversion! In any of these cases, you can pick an adventure from this book to serve as a "filler" episode or side quest in the ongoing campaign.

When the characters are the appropriate level for the adventure you wish to run, simply narrate how the characters end up in the adventure's locale. Each adventure's beginning includes a simple setting description, such as "a village with a nearby forest." Beyond these basic details, feel free to alter the adventure's location to match your campaign.

But if you do have time to prepare, you can incorporate the adventure you're running into the themes and threats of your campaign. You can alter the names of people and places in the adventure to fit better into your world, link the adventure villains to organizations and events that are important in your campaign, and plant clues to the themes of your campaign in the dragon's treasure hoard.

Creating a Campaign

These adventures can be strung together as a complete dragon-themed campaign. Simply guide your players through the adventures in the order presented in this book and award story-based level advancement at each adventure's end, so their characters are the appropriate level for the next challenge they'll face. (No level advancement is necessary before the final adventure.) You can also use one of the following narrative frameworks to connect the adventures to one another.

Option 1: Mysterious Patron

Have a friendly patron whose true identity is somewhat mysterious befriend the adventurers early in their careers and send them on each adventure in sequence. The patron might be a charismatic young monk, a kindly teacher, a diminutive scamp, or a scatter-brained elder, and might or might not be accompanied by seven golden canaries or dazzling yellow butterflies, which are actually ancient gold dragons in disguise—the companions of the dragon god Bahamut, which is the patron's true identity.

Perhaps foreseeing that they are destined to become mighty heroes, Bahamut takes the adventurers under his metaphorical wing and sends them on adventures to deal with draconic concerns, great and small, across the world. The patron might feign surprise when an adventure that doesn't at first seem to involve a dragon (such as "The Will of Orcus," chapter 3) turns out to revolve around one, but of course that's exactly the reason Bahamut sent the characters to investigate.

You can use each adventure as written, with the characters' patron steering them in the general direction of the adventure hook without spoiling any surprises in the adventure ahead. Alternatively, the patron could let the characters in on the secret early on, telling them that dragons will be a particular focus of their adventures and altering some of the adventure hooks along the way.

Option 2: Brazen Egg

Begin the campaign with the introductory encounter of chapter 10, "Dragons of the Sandstone City," ending with Eldemere entrusting the Brazen Egg to the characters. Eldemere's instructions are different, though: she explains that the egg must be "steeped" in the hoards of ten dragons, one of each chromatic and metallic kind, to activate its power. She also suggests that the egg will lead the characters toward suitable hoards. In fact, any character who sleeps within 15 feet of the egg has vivid dreams leading them toward the start of the next adventure.

To draw power from a dragon's hoard, the egg must spend 8 hours in the midst of the treasure, covered with coins and surrounded by other items. However, as soon as the empowered egg is brought within Anthradusk's hoard chamber (area H16 in chapter 10), it reaches its full potential and begins to crack open, as described in that adventure.

Option 3: Hoard Magic Items

If you have *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons*, the hoard of magic items described in that book can provide an incentive for characters to seek out dragons of increasing power and different kinds. Add the following items to the rewards acquired in the first three adventures: a *Scaled Ornament* in "Death at Sunset," a *Dragon Vessel* in "Baker's Doesn't," and a *Dragon's Wrath Weapon* and a *Dragon-Touched Focus* in "The Will of Orcus." All four items are Slumbering when the characters first acquire them, but in later adventures, the items can be awakened by steeping them in dragons' hoards.

DOMINIK MAYER

Running the Adventures

To run each of these adventures, you need the fifth edition core rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. Spells and equipment mentioned in the adventures are described in the *Player's Handbook*. Magic items are detailed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and monsters appear in the *Monster Manual*.

The table of contents summarizes the adventures in this anthology. Each adventure is designed for four to six characters of a particular level, but you can adjust for larger or smaller groups by changing the number of foes in an encounter and giving a small group additional resources, as explained in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Each of the adventures can take place in any world you choose, as long as the location has the basic elements listed at the beginning of each adventure.

Preparation

Every adventure in this book begins with a page that helps you prepare and run the adventure. It includes the following elements:

Key Plot Points. A summary of the key elements in the adventure's story

Preparation. Steps to get yourself ready to run the adventure, including a list of all the stat blocks from the *Monster Manual* you might need

Key NPCs. A table summarizing key nonplayer characters in the adventure—their names, roles, stat blocks, and locations—to help you keep track of them during play

Player Assistance

As described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, you can streamline your role as Dungeon Master by delegating certain tasks to the other players, especially if this is your first time behind the DM's screen. Before play begins, work with the other players to divide any or all of the following tasks among them:

Initiative Tracker. In combat, one player tracks Initiative for the characters and monsters.

Monster Wranglers. Whenever the characters enter combat with Hostile monsters, one or two players run these monsters using the stat blocks in the *Monster Manual*. (Two players can share this role.)

Rules Consultant. One player references rules in the *Player's Handbook* or other books as needed.

Adventures for One Character

While the *Dungeon Master's Guide* explains how to adjust adventures for different party sizes, three of the adventures (indicated in the table of contents) are particularly well-suited for play with a single adventurer. Each of these adventures includes instructions for ensuring the character faces an appropriate challenge.

Central to those instructions is the *Blessing of the Lone Champion*, a supernatural gift that bolsters the solo character's abilities.

Blessing of the Lone Champion

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

You gain the following benefits:

Heroic Inspiration. You gain Heroic Inspiration when you finish a Short or Long Rest and whenever the DM has you roll Initiative.

Temporary Hit Points. You gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to 10 times your level when you gain this blessing and when you gain a level.

A DRACONIC HISTORY

In addition to ten adventures, this book includes special sections that feature art of each dragon variety, drawing from almost the whole 50-year history of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, from the 1977 *Monster Manual* to the one published in 2025. The appearance of all ten dragon types has evolved significantly over the past fifty years, but close examination of these images reveals points of continuity as well, from the blue dragon's nose horn to the silver dragon's crest.

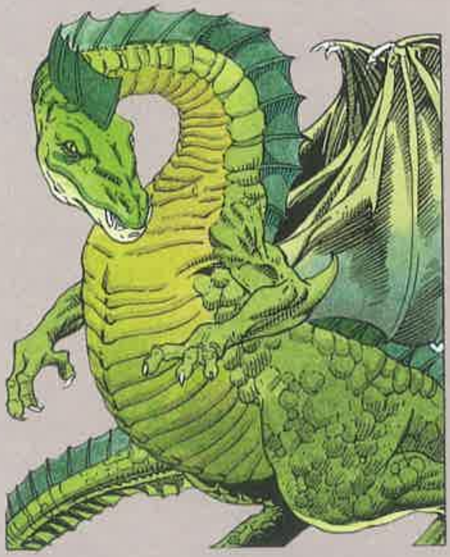
Artist Todd Lockwood spearheaded a thorough revision of all ten dragon types for the release of D&D's third edition in 2000, basing his designs on the anatomy of real-world animals and certain points of continuity with earlier designs. With a few variations, those designs set the standard for D&D's dragons for over 20 years.

In preparation for the release of the *Monster Manual* (2025), art director Josh Herman led a comprehensive refresh of all the dragon looks as D&D began its second half-century. With the goal of ensuring each dragon's distinct identity—its personality, preferred habitat, and combat style—shines through in its look, this redesign showcases visually what's unique about each type of dragon.

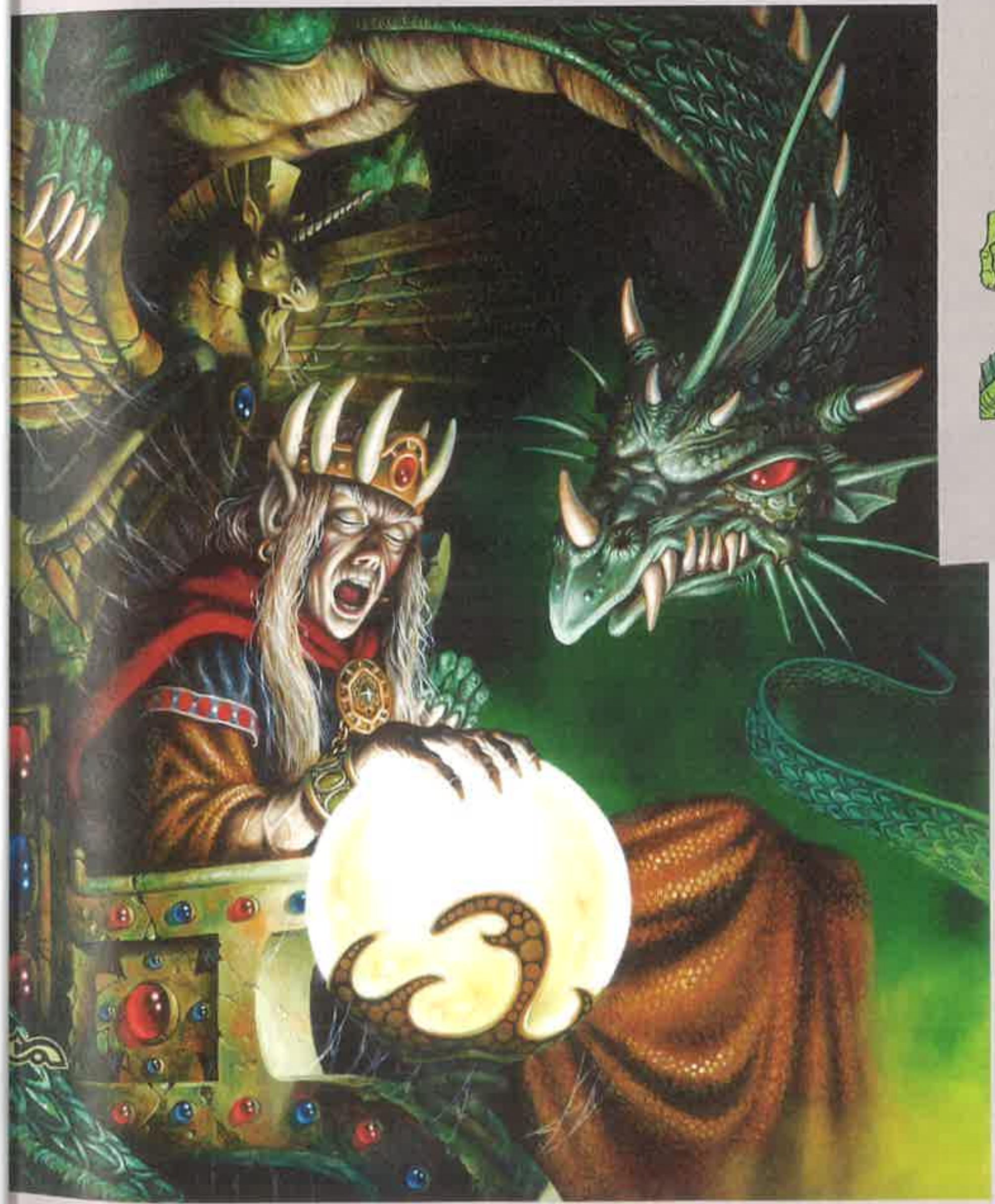
In the same way, this book highlights how an adventure featuring one kind of dragon can feel distinct from all the others.

HISTORY OF
GREEN DRAGONS

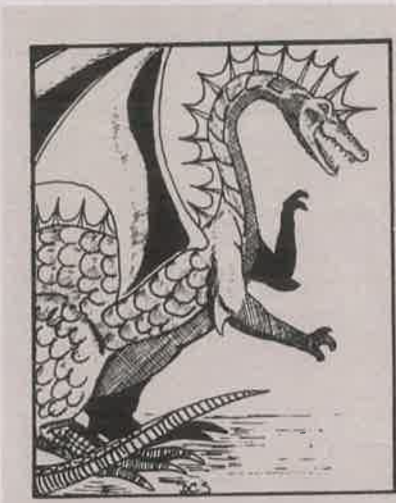
The Dragonlance adventure *Dragons of Dreams* (1985) solidified green dragons' identity as sly, manipulative, mind-controlling schemers. Clyde Caldwell's famous cover art shows the mighty green dragon Cyan Bloodbane filling the mind of the elf king Loric with nightmares.



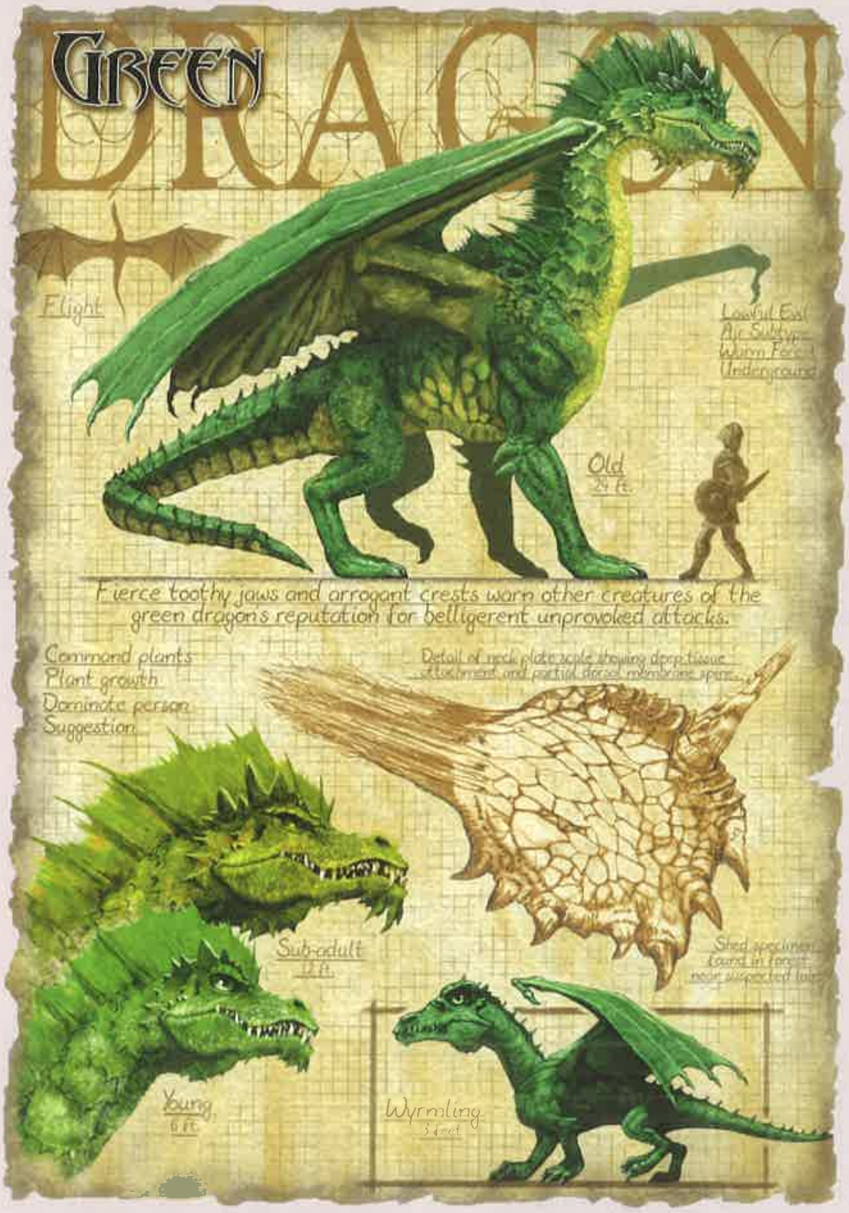
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



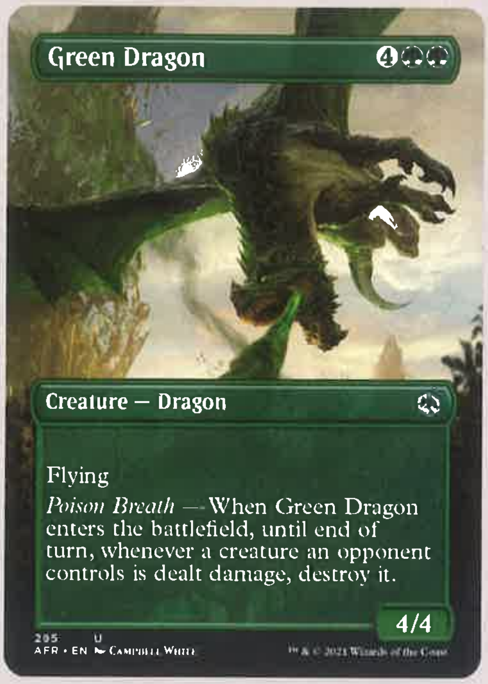
Dragons of Dreams (1985)
Artist: Clyde Caldwell



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


GREEN
DRAGON
Flight
Lawful Evil
Air Subtype
Warm Forest
Underground
Old
24 ft.
Fierce toothy jaws and arrogant crests warn other creatures of the green dragon's reputation for belligerent unprovoked attacks.
Command plants
Plant growth
Dominate person
Suggestion
Detail of neck plate scale showing deep tissue attachment and partial dorsal membrane spine.
Sub-adult
12 ft.
Shed specimen found in forest near suspected lair
Young
6 ft.
Wyrmling
3 feet

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha


Green Dragon 4

Creature — Dragon

Flying

Poison Breath — When Green Dragon enters the battlefield, until end of turn, whenever a creature an opponent controls is dealt damage, destroy it.

4/4

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AFR • EN Campbell White
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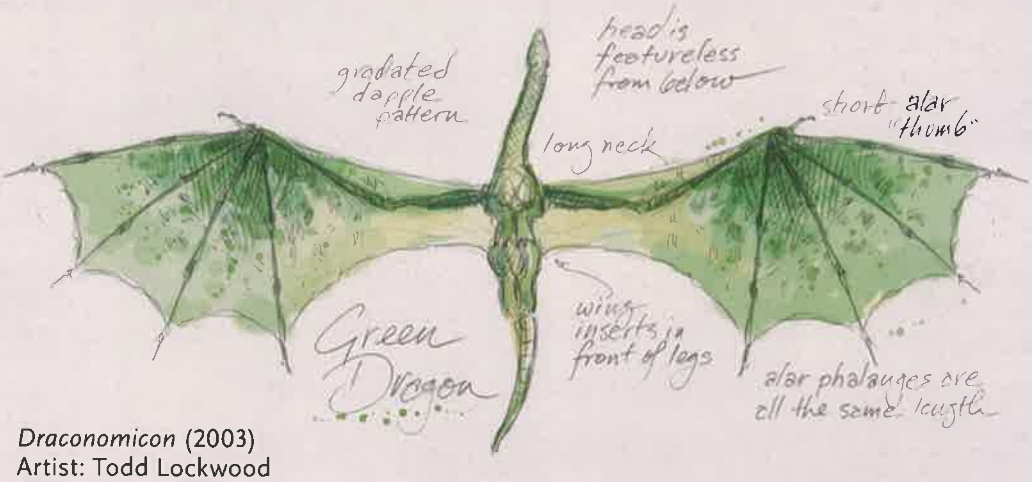
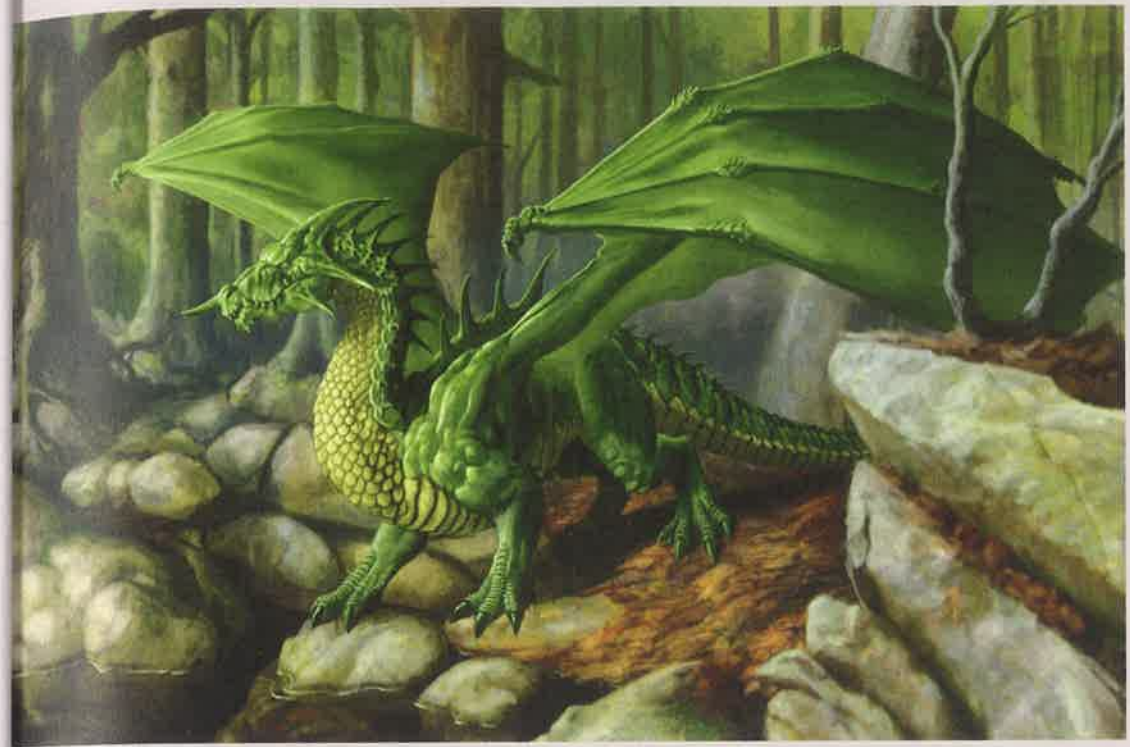
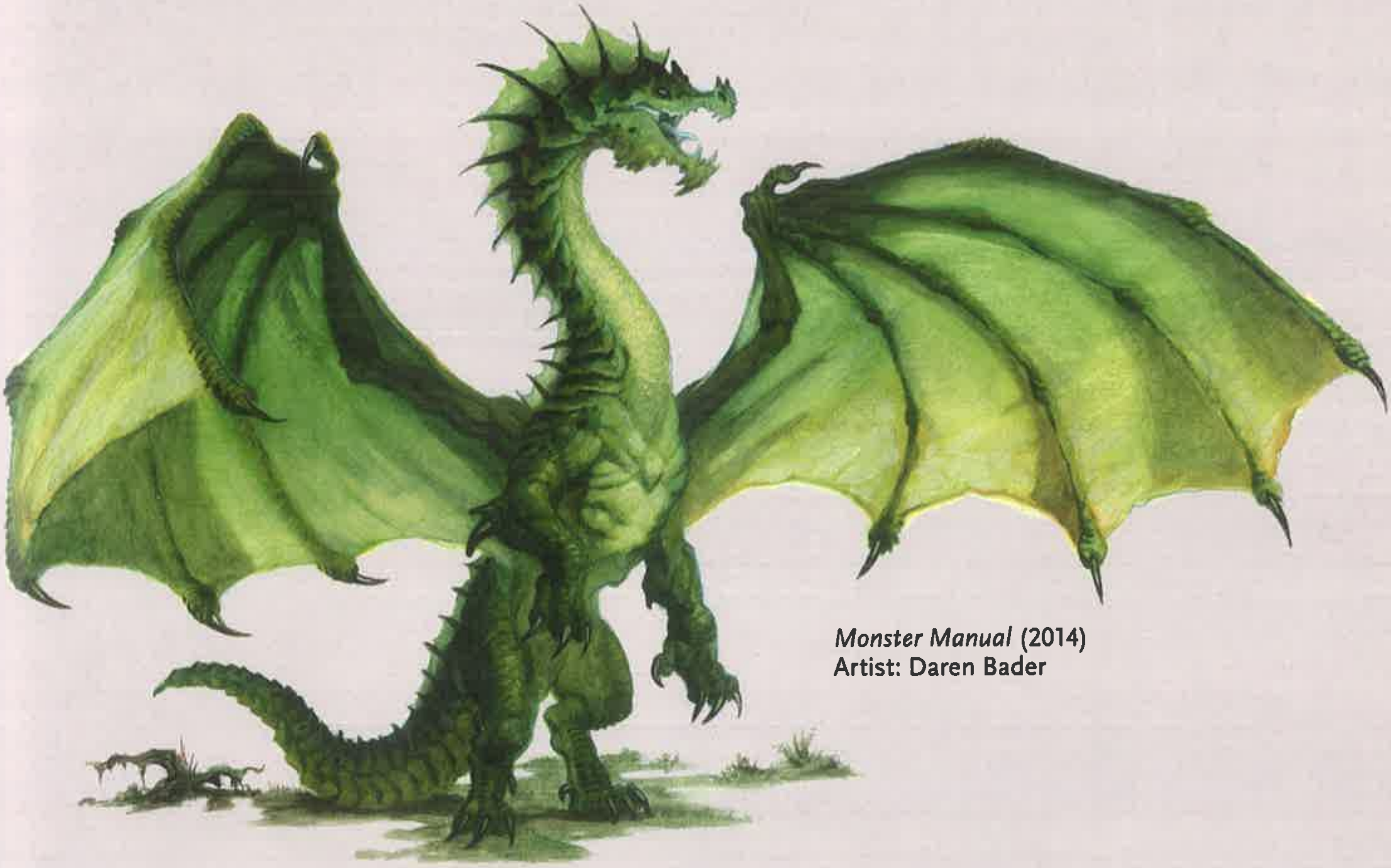
Adventures in the Forgotten Realms (2021)
Artist: Campbell White


gradated dapple pattern
head is featureless from below
long neck
short alar "thumb"
Green Dragon
wing inserts in front of legs
alar phalanges are all the same length

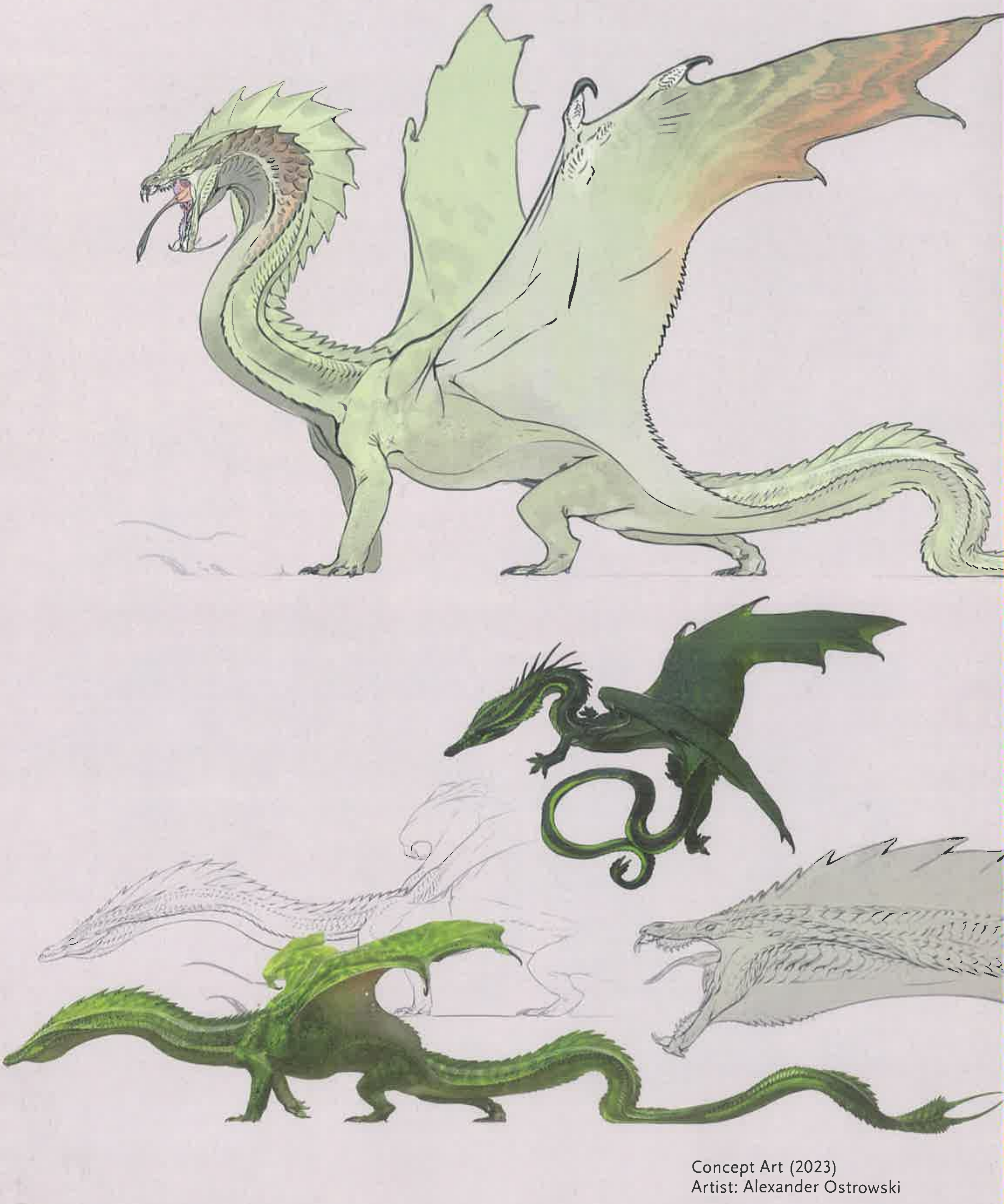
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



Monster Manual (2008)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Daren Bader



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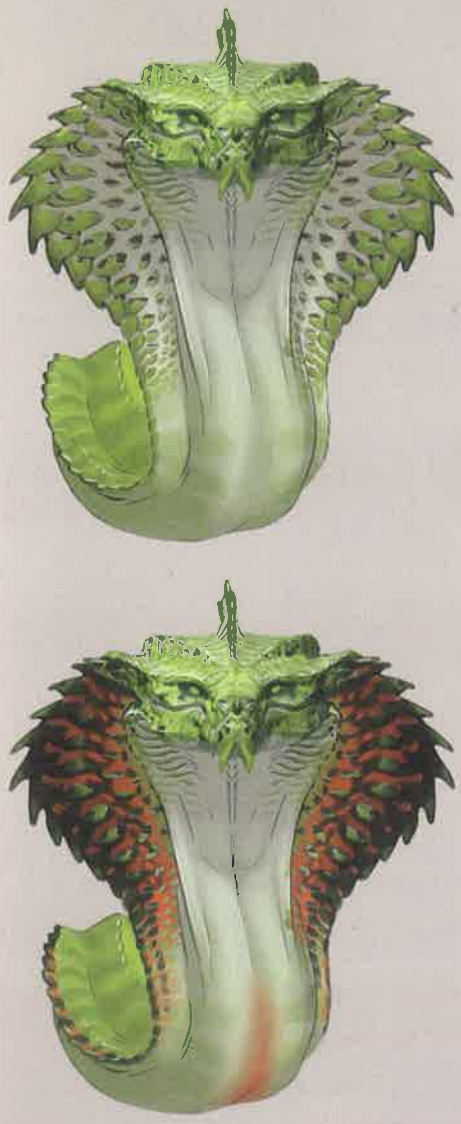
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Concept Art (2023)
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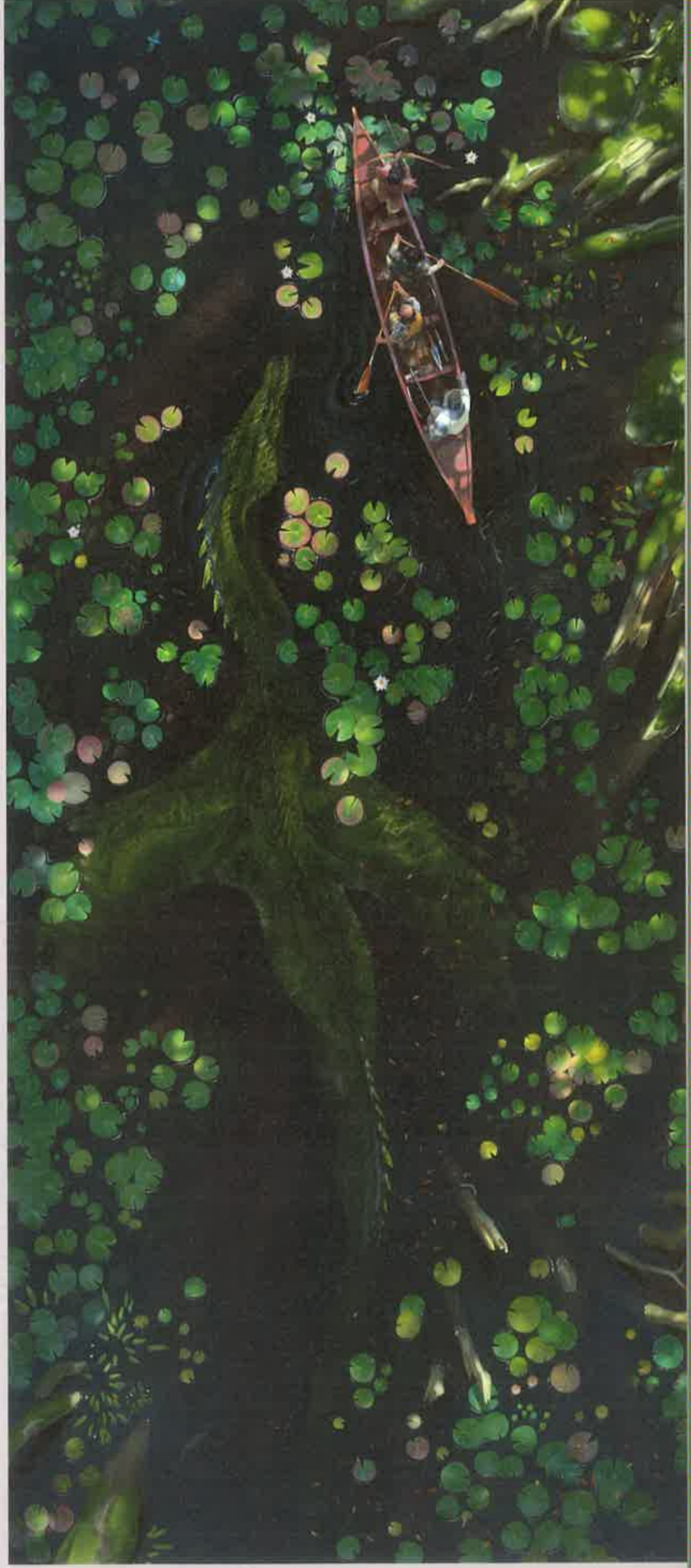


Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski

CHAPTER 1

Death at Sunset

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 1
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN ANY HEAVILY FORESTED REGION.

If you start the characters at level 2, skip the gathering of samples from the redwood trees in the grove and move the characters directly to the entrance of the dragon's lair (area R4).

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to this adventure's story:

Redwood Watch. Two council members of Redwood Watch, a village founded in the aftermath of an evil dragon's defeat, ask the characters to investigate the disappearance of villagers in the nearby redwood grove and learn more about a mysterious blight afflicting the trees.

Unnatural Corruption. The characters discover that the blight is unnatural. They may learn from grove denizens, including the missing elf council member, that a new dragon lurks nearby.

Green Dragon Wyrmling. The characters learn that the corruption's source is a green dragon wyrmling who hatched from the slain dragon's egg. The characters must confront and defeat the wyrmling in his mother's lair before he grows in power and threatens the village.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section (including "Redwood Watch" and "The Council").

Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table below. The characters will interact with these individuals throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Familiarize yourself with the Village Green Rumors table in the "Village Green" section. The characters should learn a new rumor each time they interact with the villagers until they've heard all the rumors.

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

- Blight, Twig
- Blight, Vine
- Commoner
- Dryad
- Green Dragon Wyrmling
- Guard
- Mephit, Mud
- Noble
- Priest Acolyte
- Scout
- Yuan-ti Malison (Type 1)
- Zombie
- Animals:
  - Constrictor Snake
  - Giant Centipede
  - Giant Venomous Snake
  - Mastiff
  - Swarm of Insects
  - Venomous Snake

KEY NPCS

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Armin Whisperwind	Lost elf council member	**Scout** (Medium)	R4
Darrin, Jherris, Lyrienne, and Rayna	Elves forced into the dragon's service	**Guard** (Medium)	L1
Fergus Deerborn	Elf village cook	**Commoner** (Medium)	"Village Green"
Gwenhumara Goldmoss	Elf council member	**Priest Acolyte** (Medium)	"A Call for Heroes"
Kaynen	Guardian of the redwood grove	**Dryad**	R3
Marilissa	Sunset-Is-Nigh's devoted servant	**Yuan-ti Malison (Type 1)**	L3
Selenar Woodwise	Elf council member	**Noble** (Medium)	"A Call for Heroes"
Sunny Lightpurse	Halfling traveling merchant	**Commoner** (Small)	"Village Green"
Sunset-Is-Nigh	Child of Death-at-Sunset	**Green Dragon Wyrmling**	L6

DOMINIK MAYER

Adventure Background

Centuries ago, six quarreling elven families reconciled. Each family planted a redwood sapling in a circular grove to represent their newfound harmony. Decades later, after the saplings grew tall and mighty, an ancient green dragon dug a lair in the redwoods' roots, poisoning the grove and surrounding forest. The elves called the dragon Death-at-Sunset, for twilight was always when the dragon descended on her prey. The dragon adopted this name, reveling in the terror it inspired and bellowing it just before rampaging.

One hundred years ago, an elf warrior named Ethvarn and her allies slew Death-at-Sunset. Ethvarn died in the assault. The surviving elves pulled back from Redwood Grove, leaving only a few wardens in an outpost called Redwood Watch.

Over the past few months, the inhabitants of Redwood Watch, now a village, have noticed the forest's trees growing sickly. In the past month, five villagers have disappeared in the grove. The first was council member Armin Whisperwind. Four villagers then went searching for him, but none returned. Terrified and confused, the village's council has called for heroes to investigate.

Unbeknownst to the villagers, a green dragon wyrmling has hatched from an egg in Death-at-Sunset's lair. The wyrmling's presence has corrupted the forest and lured other evil creatures to the area; he has also captured the missing villagers and forced them to serve him. The characters must investigate the grove's corruption and defeat this wyrmling, who calls himself Sunset-Is-Nigh.

Redwood Watch

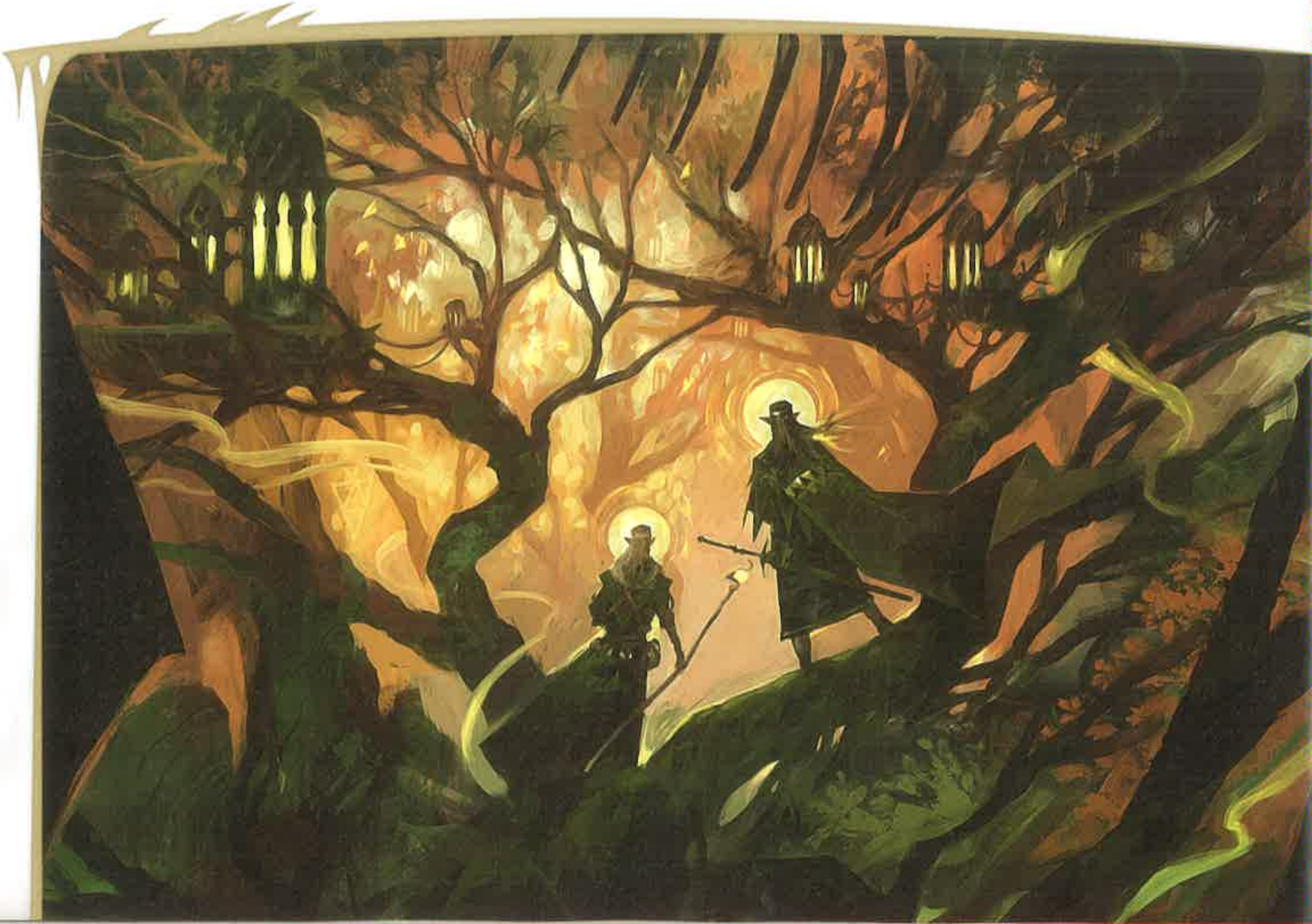
Redwood Watch is a village of about a hundred people who work primarily as hunters, trappers, lumberers, and artisans. Most are elves descended from the grove's six original families, but the village's peaceful ways and idyllic surroundings have also attracted humans, orcs, and a few goliaths and dragonborn.

The village consists of freestanding huts made from wood and leaves as well as large tree hollows that serve as homes and shops. A few hardy individuals have made their homes amid the forest's branches in tree houses that overlook the forest floor.

Owing to the village's multicultural heritage, all villagers know Common. The residents are close-knit; most consider themselves an extended family.

The Council

Armin and two other elf council members lead Redwood Watch, though Armin is missing. The council members were among those who faced Death-at-Sunset a century ago, and the councilors' heroism is



remembered to this day; the villagers share all the following information if the characters ask about the council members.

Armin Whisperwind. Armin (Medium **Scout**) left Redwood Watch to investigate reports of the grove's corruption a month ago. He never returned. The villagers worry something terrible befell him, saying the skilled elf tracker would never have abandoned Redwood Watch permanently. (The wyrmling is now forcing Armin to defend area R4.)

Gwenhumara Goldmoss. Gwenhumara (Medium **Priest Acolyte**) is an elf healer who tended to the wounded after the battle against Death-at-Sunset. Recently, she's had nightmares of the dragon's return; she worries that the dragon's spirit lingers among the redwoods' roots. Gwenhumara happily heals characters who are injured, though she is too afraid to leave the village herself.

Selenar Woodwise. Selenar (Medium **Noble**) was among the elf warriors in Death-at-Sunset's lair when the ancient green dragon died, and he is erroneously convinced the forest's corruption isn't related to dragons. Selenar holds a deep reverence for nature and is anxious for the characters to identify the threat against the forest.

A Call for Heroes

When the adventure begins, the characters know the general history of Redwood Watch and its plight involving missing villagers. As soon as the characters enter the village, council members Selenar Woodwise and Gwenhumara Goldmoss approach them to provide more information about Redwood Watch's call for heroes.

Read or paraphrase the following:

> Standing before you are two wood elves with the regal bearing of leaders. The man, Selenar Woodwise, wears a steel breastplate and billowing green cloak, while the woman, Gwenhumara Goldmoss, is clad in flowing verdant robes.
>
> "We are pleased you answered our call," Gwenhumara says. "Something evil lurks in Redwood Grove. Given our history with the dragon Death-at-Sunset, you can understand our concern—and now villagers are missing. We need you to find our missing villagers, determine why the forest is blighted, and end any threats you discover."
>
> Selenar interjects, "I'm certain there isn't another dragon, but something is terribly wrong."
>
> Gwenhumara clasps a reassuring hand on Selenar's shoulder.

The elves answer any questions as best they can.

DOMINIK MAYER

The council members have little to offer as a reward, but the characters are welcome to keep any treasures found in the forest. Additionally, the council members offer the characters use of a room-size tree hollow furnished to house guests and point out Fergus's Grill nearby.

Gathering Samples

After the elves have answered any questions the characters might have, Gwenhumara makes the following offer:

> "Before you do anything else, I would like to inure you against the forest's poisons, but I don't understand the corruption well enough to make the proper antitoxins. Bring back samples of bark from each of the grove's six redwoods. Then I can make as many antitoxins as you need for as long as you're here."

Gwenhumara needs one tree bark sample from each of the grove's redwoods to brew effective Antitoxins. The elf hands the characters six glass Vials with rubber stoppers to store the samples.

Once the characters have retrieved the samples, Gwenhumara can brew up to ten vials of Antitoxin each day. It's up to the characters how they'd like to distribute those Antitoxins among themselves.

If the characters explore Redwood Grove and collect the six samples for Gwenhumara, give them a reward of 100 XP each, or simply advance them to level 2. The characters should be level 2 before entering the dragon's lair.

Exploring Redwood Watch

Before the characters set off for Redwood Grove, they might wish to spend some time getting to know the villagers they're trying to help.

Village Green

Every evening, most of the villagers gather in the village green, a clearing at the center of Redwood Watch. There they share meals, socialize, play games, and even put on short plays.

Fergus's Grill

The elf cook Fergus Deerborn (Medium **Commoner**), an elegant man in constant motion, runs a small eatery out of the village green. Fergus creates simple yet tasty dishes from donated mushrooms, berries, lichens, herbs, rabbit, venison, and other forest bounties. Fergus's food is available to visitors for a small donation, as is the fine elven wine produced by the council-owned winery.

Rumors

When the characters interact with NPCs anywhere in Redwood Watch, villagers voice their concerns about recent local events. Roll on the Village Green Rumors table to determine which rumor an NPC shares. Roll again if the characters have already been told the resulting rumor, and stop rolling once the characters have been told all of them.

VILLAGE GREEN RUMORS

1d6	Rumor
1	"Three bandits were robbing folks on the forest's edge a while back. I bet they're still hiding in the woods somewhere." [Partially true; the bandits are now dead. Their animated corpses are in area R7.]
2	"That dragon cursed these woods when she died. We need to leave before the curse kills us all!" [False; there is no curse on the forest.]
3	"Don't wander the forest alone! Evil trees grow there now." [Partially true; the dragon's influence has encouraged the growth of many forest blights, including the **Vine Blight** and **Twig Blight** in area L4.]
4	"Remember Ethvarn, who died fighting Death-at-Sunset? No one ever found her sword, Leafwarden. It's probably still in the dragon's lair." [True; Leafwarden is in the dragon's hoard in area L7.]
5	"There's a strange man in the forest with green skin and hair made of leaves. I think he's a forest spirit!" [Partially true; a **Dryad** has moved into area R3. He might help the characters.]
6	"Dragons can come back from the dead as awful abominations made of animate bones. Death-at-Sunset was probably too wicked to die only once." [Partially true; dracoliches exist, but Death-at-Sunset isn't one.]

Traveling Merchant

A traveling merchant named Sunny Lightpurse (Small **Commoner**) recently set up shop in Redwood Watch. Sunny is a golden-haired halfling with a perpetual smile that's true to her name. Each day in the village green, Sunny unpacks her wares from a heavily laden wagon. When not doing business, Sunny cheerily praises her two horses, Buttercup and Daisy, and chats with passersby.

Sunny's Wares. Sunny sells any goods from the *Player's Handbook* that cost 100 GP or less. However, she has a limited stock of certain items: four vials of Alchemist's Fire, one vial of Antitoxin, and four *Potions of Healing*.

Sunny's Generosity. Sunny is Friendly to patrons. She was once a merchant in a nearby city, but her soft spot for those in need meant she couldn't compete with more cutthroat merchants. As an Influence action, a character can ask Sunny to lower her prices. The character then makes a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a successful check, Sunny offers a 10 percent discount on all her goods.

Redwood Grove

Redwood Grove is three miles east of Redwood Watch. The characters can reach the grove in about an hour.

As shown on map 1.1, Redwood Grove includes six redwoods. Each tree is around 300 feet tall.

Redwood Grove Features

The grove has the following features.

Haunted

Ever since Sunset-Is-Nigh hatched, the spirits of the elves who died fighting Death-at-Sunset have been restless. At night, harmless shadows flit strangely among the trees. The breeze carries whispers of "Beware, beware!" and "Her legacy returns!" An additional haunting is described in area R8.

Light

Sunlight fills the grove with Bright Light during the day. At night, the tree canopy blocks any moonlight, leaving the grove in Darkness.

Stream

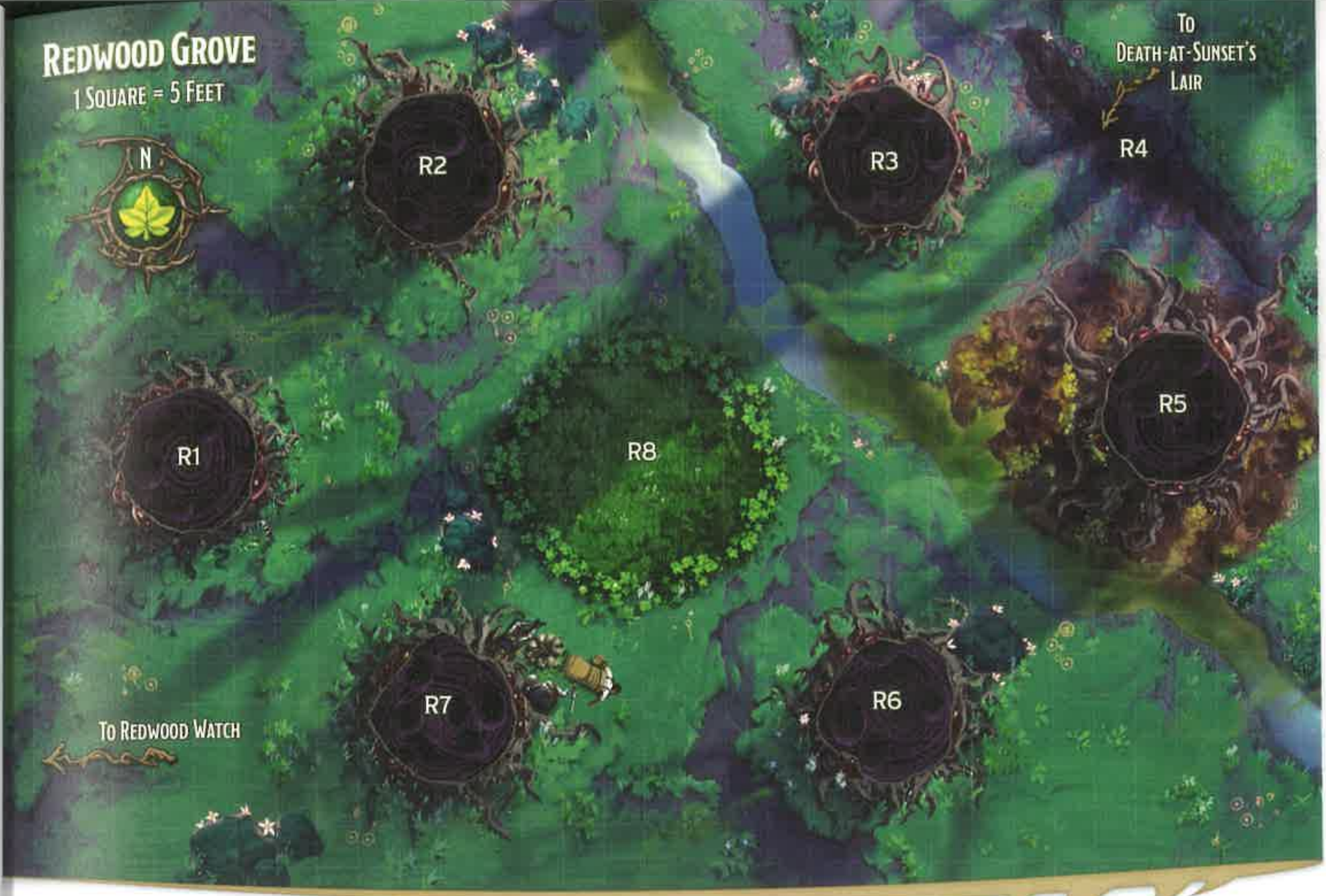
A small stream winds through the eastern side of the grove. The stream is five feet wide and only a few inches deep. However, draconic magic has tainted the water. A creature that drinks from the stream must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) Poison damage and have the Poisoned condition for 1 hour.

Bark Samples

As a Utilize action, a character next to a redwood can harvest a bark sample using an empty Vial. The redwoods are in areas R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, and R7.

Redwood Grove Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 1.1.



MAP 1.1: REDWOOD GROVE

R1: Looming Redwood

> A redwood looms above, its lowest branches impossibly high up and its bark weeping darkened sap. Sickly grasses and wilting wildflowers surround the wide trunk.

R2: Sickly Redwood

> The bark of this once-regal redwood is sloughing off in sheets, like a snake's shed skin. Impossibly tall branches cast a sickly pall over the area.

R3: Dryad's Tree

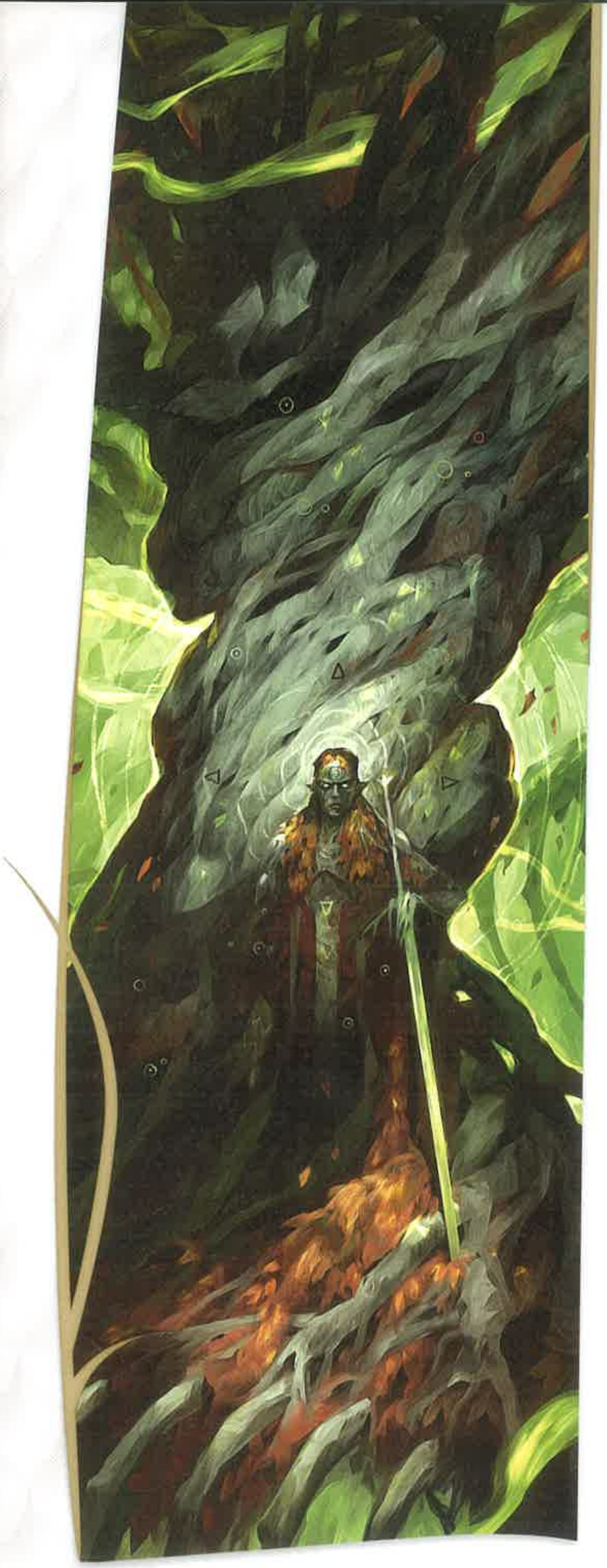
> A redwood towers above, its trunk as wide as a building and its bark peeling like dry skin. A few feet above the ground, a figure with green skin and hair made of leaves sits on an enormous shelf fungus like it's a throne. He eyes you imperiously as you approach.

This is Kaynen, a **Dryad** who made this tree his home just before Sunset-Is-Nigh hatched. Kaynen is initially Hostile toward the characters, assuming they are bandits and commanding the characters not to touch his tree. If the characters respect Kaynen's request, his attitude becomes Indifferent.

As an Influence action, a character can ask for Kaynen's help to heal the forest. The character makes a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a successful check, Kaynen becomes Friendly. He answers questions to the best of his ability and gladly allows the characters to harvest a tree bark sample.

The dryad has heard rumors that a dragon wyrmling lurks down in Death-at-Sunset's old lair (see "Death-at-Sunset's Lair"), and he suspects the wyrmling is to blame for the forest's corruption. If the characters haven't already expressed their intent to kill the wyrmling, Kaynen asks them to do so. Kaynen also warns the characters about a strange, angry elf who lurks around the lair's entrance (area R4).

Slithering Spy. After the characters talk with Kaynen for a few minutes, a **Venomous Snake** slithers toward the tree, partially hidden by its roots. A character with a Passive Perception of 13+



DOMINIK MAYER

notices the snake, which is a spy for Marilissa, the yuan-ti in area L3. If the characters fight the snake, the snake attacks once before it tries to flee back through the lair's entrance (area R4).

R4: Lair Entrance

> A yawning, 20-foot-wide maw surrounded by tree roots and detritus slopes down into a deep underground cavern.

This is the entrance to Death-at-Sunset's lair (see "Death-at-Sunset's Lair"). The missing elf council member, Armin Whisperwind (Medium **Scout**), and his **Mastiff**, Fletcher, hide here behind roots near the opening's northeast corner and watch the characters.

As a Search action, a character can examine the ground around the lair entrance and make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a successful check, the character finds Armin's boot prints and Fletcher's paw prints. If Armin perceives the characters discovering his trail, or if the characters try to enter the lair, he fights them.

Helping Armin. Sunset-Is-Nigh captured Armin a month ago when the elf entered the grove to study its corruption. The wyrmling spent days tormenting Armin until the desperate elf agreed to drive away anyone who approaches the lair.

Armin desperately wants to escape and warn his village about the grove's corruption, but Sunset-Is-Nigh has convinced him that the wyrmling will murder all the villagers if Armin tries to escape the forest. Armin is Hostile toward all who approach.

As an Influence action, a character can try to convince Armin that the characters are strong enough to defeat Sunset-Is-Nigh. The character makes a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, Armin stops fighting, and his attitude becomes Friendly. Armin won't confront the wyrmling, and he asks the characters to escort him back to the village. Armin knows the other elves were taken into the lair but doesn't know their fate, as he isn't allowed into the lair.

Development. If the characters bring Armin back to Redwood Watch, the elf receives a teary, grateful welcome. The other council members are happy beyond words to have their companion back, and a joyous celebration ensues that night in the village green. If the characters don't attend, they receive profuse thanks the next time they return to Redwood Watch.

R5: Muddy Bog

> A pale redwood rises from the middle of a muddy bog. To the southwest, a trickling stream separates the mud from the solid ground beyond.

The stream running through the grove has made this area thick with stinking, poisonous mud. The mud is Difficult Terrain. A creature that ends its turn in the mud must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

Three **Mud Mephits** hide in the mud, drawn here by the dragon's latent evil magic. The mephits stay hidden until at least one character enters the mud, then they ambush the characters. If two mephits are destroyed, the third tries to escape.

R6: Centipede Nest

> A sickly redwood stands here, its trunk surrounded by fetid undergrowth.

The forest's corruption has attracted a nest of deadly centipedes that hide in the tree's bark. When a character moves next to the tree, a **Swarm of Insects** (centipedes) and a **Giant Centipede** skitter from behind the bark and roots to fight the characters.

R7: Gruesome Camp

> To the northeast of this redwood is a burned-out campfire, around which are three humanoid corpses. They are beginning to decay, and black streaks mar their rotting flesh. One corpse leans against the tree, insects crawling around its open, blackened mouth. Another lies on its side under a blanket, and a third is curled inside a stinking bedroll.

The three corpses here are actually **Zombies** animated by the corrupted forest's foul energies. The zombies attack when a character moves within 5 feet of one of the zombies or when a character tries to take a tree bark sample from the redwood.

As a Search action, a character within 10 feet of a zombie can assess the body and make a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a success, the character determines that the zombies originally died from drinking the poisoned water in the nearby stream.

If the characters were told the first rumor on the Village Green Rumors table, they can surmise that these zombies were formerly the bandits who were robbing folks on the forest's edge.

Mysterious Footprints. As a Search action, a character can search the camp and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the character finds boot prints and large canine paw prints circling the area. These are prints from Armin Whisperwind and his mastiff, now found in area R4.

Treasure. Characters who search the bodies find the following items:

11 GP, 240 SP, 400 CP
Three Light Crossbows
Three Scimitars
Thirty Crossbow Bolts
Healer's Kit
Hooded Lantern
Two flasks of Oil
Shovel

R8: Burial Mound

> A wide, gently sloping dirt mound rises 30 feet in the air, enveloped in feathery grass. Yellow, sickly-looking flowers bloom around the mound's edges.

This is the ceremonial burial mound of the thirty-four elves who died in the battle against Death-at-Sunset a century ago, including the elves' leader, Ethvarn.

Ever since Sunset-Is-Nigh hatched, the spirits of these elves have become restless, haunting the grove with forewarnings of coming doom. During the day, the characters feel a strange, unexplained feeling of foreboding here.

Haunted Mound. At night, ghostly images of dead elf warriors wielding tall spears appear, fading in and out of existence, some uttering cryptic warnings in Common and Elvish. Foremost among the images is Ethvarn, an androgynous elf wearing gleaming plate mail and an empty scabbard.

Vision of the Past. The first time a character stays in this area longer than 1 minute at night, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or have the Unconscious condition for 1 hour. During that hour, the character can't be woken using magical or mundane means. The character dreams of the battle in which these elf warriors died; before succumbing to her wounds, Death-at-Sunset unleashed her poisonous breath on dozens of elves, who died painful, choking deaths in her tunnels. Before waking, a dreaming character perceives a final image of the dragon's enormous corpse filling an underground cavern.

Death-at-Sunset's Lair

Sunset-Is-Nigh has made his home in the lair of his dead mother, Death-at-Sunset.

Lair Features

The lair has the following features.

Ceilings

The ceilings in areas L1–L5 and L7 are 40 feet tall. The ceiling in the corpse chamber (area L6), where the wyrmling has made his home, is 60 feet tall.

Light

The lair is shrouded in Darkness. Area descriptions assume characters can see in the dark or have a light source.

Tracking

The wyrmling's tracks are distinctive; as a Search action, any character can look for tracks and make a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a successful check, the character finds the wyrmling's trail to and from area L6.

Walls

The lair's walls are made of soft earth and thick tree roots.

Lair Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 1.2.

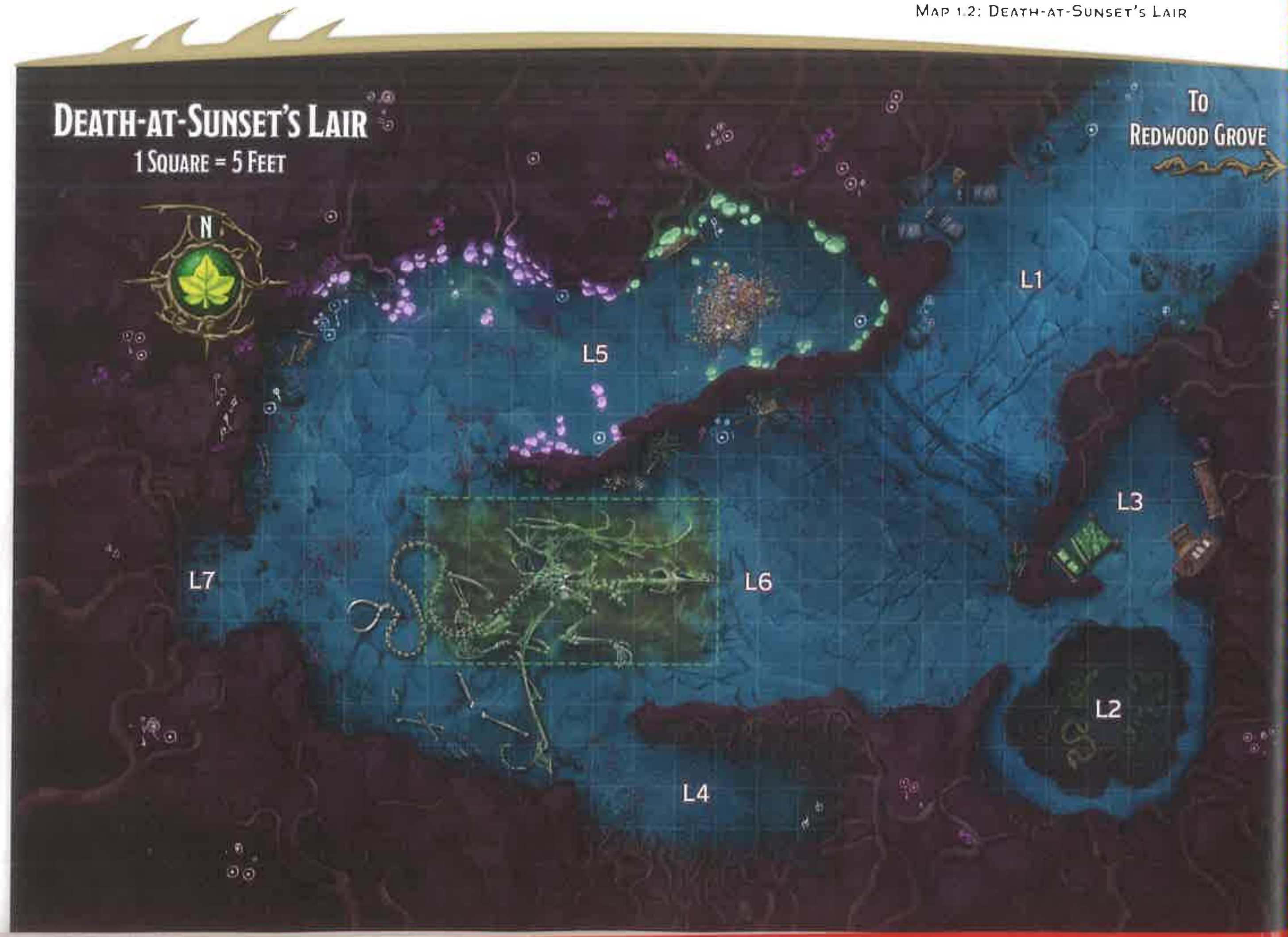
L1: Guarded Tunnel

> The tunnel from above leads into a dank, sprawling cavern walled with dirt and twisting roots. Enormous claw marks mar the walls.

Hiding in an alcove along the northwest wall are four elves (Medium **Guards**) from Redwood Watch: Darrin, Jherris, Lyrienne, and Rayna. The elves are Hostile toward the characters. As soon as the characters venture more than 10 feet into this area, the elves begin combat, screaming at the characters to leave and never return.

Helping the Elves. After Armin Whisperwind went missing, each elf separately ventured into the grove to search for the council member. Each met the same fate as Armin: Sunset-Is-Nigh captured them, tormented them, and forced them to serve as lair guardians. Sunset-Is-Nigh has convinced the elves that his mother's ghost will murder them if they try to escape. The wyrmling has also threatened violence against the villagers if the elves disobey him.

Map 1.2: Death-at-Sunset's Lair



As an Influence action, a character can tell the elves the wyrmling will soon fall or that there's no dragon ghost and make a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a successful check, the elves stop fighting and become Friendly. If they become Friendly, the elves return to Redwood Watch. Before leaving, Jherris tells the characters about a vial of Acid he has hidden in his bedroll (see "Treasure" below).

Downward Slope. To the southwest, the cavern slopes 20 feet steeply downward toward the chamber with Death-at-Sunset's corpse (area L6). This sloping area is Difficult Terrain.

Treasure. In the northwest alcove are the elves' stinking bedrolls and meager food supplies. Hidden in Jherris's bedroll is a vial of Acid. He had been working up the courage to throw the Acid at the wyrmling.

Development. If the elves return to Redwood Watch, they are warmly welcomed home. The villagers celebrate the elves that night in the village green. If the characters don't attend, they receive profuse thanks the next time they return to Redwood Watch.

L2: Snake Pit

> Roots and earth form the ceiling of this large chamber. A wide, shallow pit filled with slithering snakes takes up much of the room.

This pit is home to the snake pets of Marilissa, the yuan-ti in area L3. The pit contains two **Giant Venomous Snakes**, one **Constrictor Snake**, and six **Venomous Snakes**. The snakes don't leave the pit on their own and fight any character who enters it.

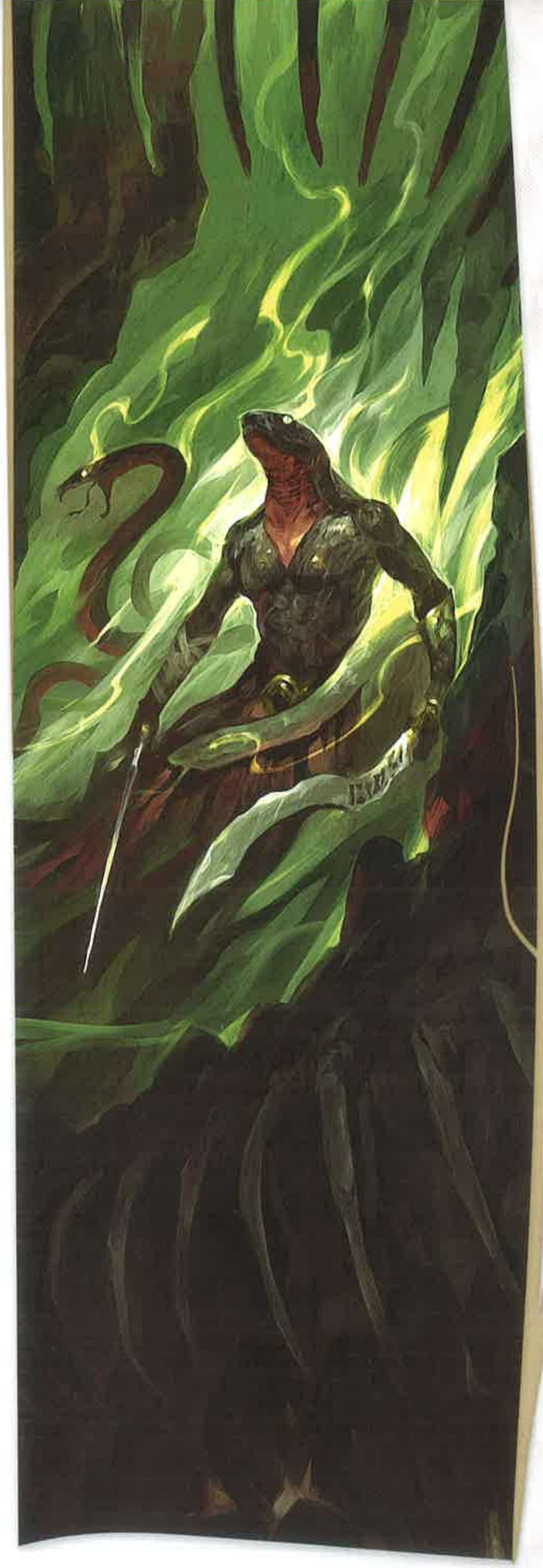
Pit Edges. The edges of the pit slope sharply downward and are Difficult Terrain. The pit is 3 feet deep.

L3: Marilissa's Quarters

> These strangely furnished living quarters include a bed, a chair, and a table. Sitting on the chair is a woman with a snake's head and a human's body. She strokes a snake coiled on her lap and grins at you wickedly.

This is Marilissa, a **Yuan-ti Malison (Type 1)**, and a **Venomous Snake** pet she named Robby.

Marilissa was passing through the grove when Sunset-Is-Nigh hatched five years ago. Feeling draconic magic seep into the forest, Marilissa believed she was destined to serve the wyrmling and the terrible beast he will inevitably become. She is the wyrmling's most dedicated servant.



DAMIEN MAMMOLITI, DOMINIK MAYER

Dealing with Marilissa. If the characters arrive in this area and haven't killed Sunset-Is-Nigh, Marilissa is Indifferent toward them and asks them why they're here. If the characters express any ill intent toward the wyrmling, Marilissa and her pet become Hostile and engage them in combat. Marilissa fights to the death to protect the wyrmling.

As an Influence action, a character can lie to Marilissa about their purpose and make a DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check. On a successful check, Marilissa believes the characters aren't here to harm the wyrmling. She lets the characters pass unharmed, although if she notices the characters fighting any other lair denizens, Marilissa enters the fray against them.

If the characters tell her they have killed the wyrmling, Marilissa forgoes any conversation. She tells the characters she'll savor killing them as retribution and begins combat.

L4: Root Cellar

> Thick roots and dry, brittle twigs jut from the earthen walls of this cavern.

A **Vine Blight** and a **Twig Blight** remain motionless here until a character ventures more than 10 feet into this area. The blights then advance toward the characters and fight to the death.

L5: Centipede Infestation

> Many-legged bugs swarm over the north and south walls of this long cavern.

Two **Swarms of Insects** (centipedes) and two **Giant Centipedes** crawl across these walls. The insects fight any creature that moves within 5 feet of the north or south wall in this area.

L6: Corpse Chamber

> A thin, pale-green fog hangs in the center of this vast chamber above the skeleton of an enormous dragon. Through its gaping eye sockets, you spot flitting movement within the dead dragon's skull.
>
> "It is I, Sunset-Is-Nigh!" croaks a high-pitched voice from inside the skull. "Enter my lair and find your doom!"

Sunset-Is-Nigh, the **Green Dragon Wyrmling** who hatched from Death-at-Sunset's egg, lives in this chamber. The wyrmling skitters through his mother's skeleton, trying to lure the characters into the poisonous miasma that hangs in the air. As soon as a character enters the miasma, the wyrmling starts combat. If Marilissa, the yuan-ti in area L3, notices battle here, she comes to help Sunset-Is-Nigh, arriving at the end of the third round of combat.

Roleplaying Sunset-Is-Nigh. The wyrmling, whose name proudly references his mother's, is a cruel, arrogant, entitled creature. Sunset-Is-Nigh intends to one day eclipse his mother's legacy. The fact that the wyrmling has convinced the captive elves of his fearsomeness has only fed his ego.

At every opportunity, Sunset-Is-Nigh taunts the characters in Draconic, calling them weaklings and false heroes who will never defeat him. The wyrmling insists he is a mighty dragon who will conquer everything the characters hold dear.

Sickening Miasma. Although Death-at-Sunset is long dead, the powerful magic she radiated still hangs in this chamber as a poisonous miasma that stretches to the ceiling. The dotted line on the map shows the miasma's area. A creature that enters the miasma for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

Skeleton. Death-at-Sunset's skeleton is enormous and difficult to traverse. Areas with bones in them are Difficult Terrain.

Treasure. The elves of Redwood Grove confiscated Death-at-Sunset's hoard a century ago, selling pieces to pay for the costs of restoring the destroyed forest and distributing the remainder among the folk living in the forest. However, a trail of coins leads west into a small alcove (area L7), where Sunset-Is-Nigh has carved a repository for his own growing hoard. A character who spends 1 minute can collect the trail of coins, which amount to 6 GP, 37 SP, and 30 CP.

L7: Wyrmling's Hoard

> Thousands of gems and coins, mostly copper and silver but some gold, are piled in this small chamber. Rising from the center of this hoard is a magnificent sword etched with Elvish runes.

Sunset-Is-Nigh keeps the treasure he accumulated through theft and tributes here.

Treasure. The hoard contains the following treasure:

210 GP, 3,150 SP, 6,300 CP
Twelve moonstones (worth 50 GP each)
Jade orb (worth 100 GP) engraved in Infernal with the name of Stygia
Golden cup (worth 50 GP)

Hand mirror in a silver frame (worth 40 GP)
Ivory comb (worth 35 GP)
Dust of Disappearance
Keoghtom's Ointment
Potion of Giant Strength (hill)
Spell Scroll of *Web*

Leafwarden. At the center of the wyrmling's hoard is Leafwarden, the sword of the elf warrior Ethvarn. The sword was embedded in Death-at-Sunset's flesh when the dragon was slain, and the elves never found it. Leafwarden is a *Dragon Slayer* (Longsword).

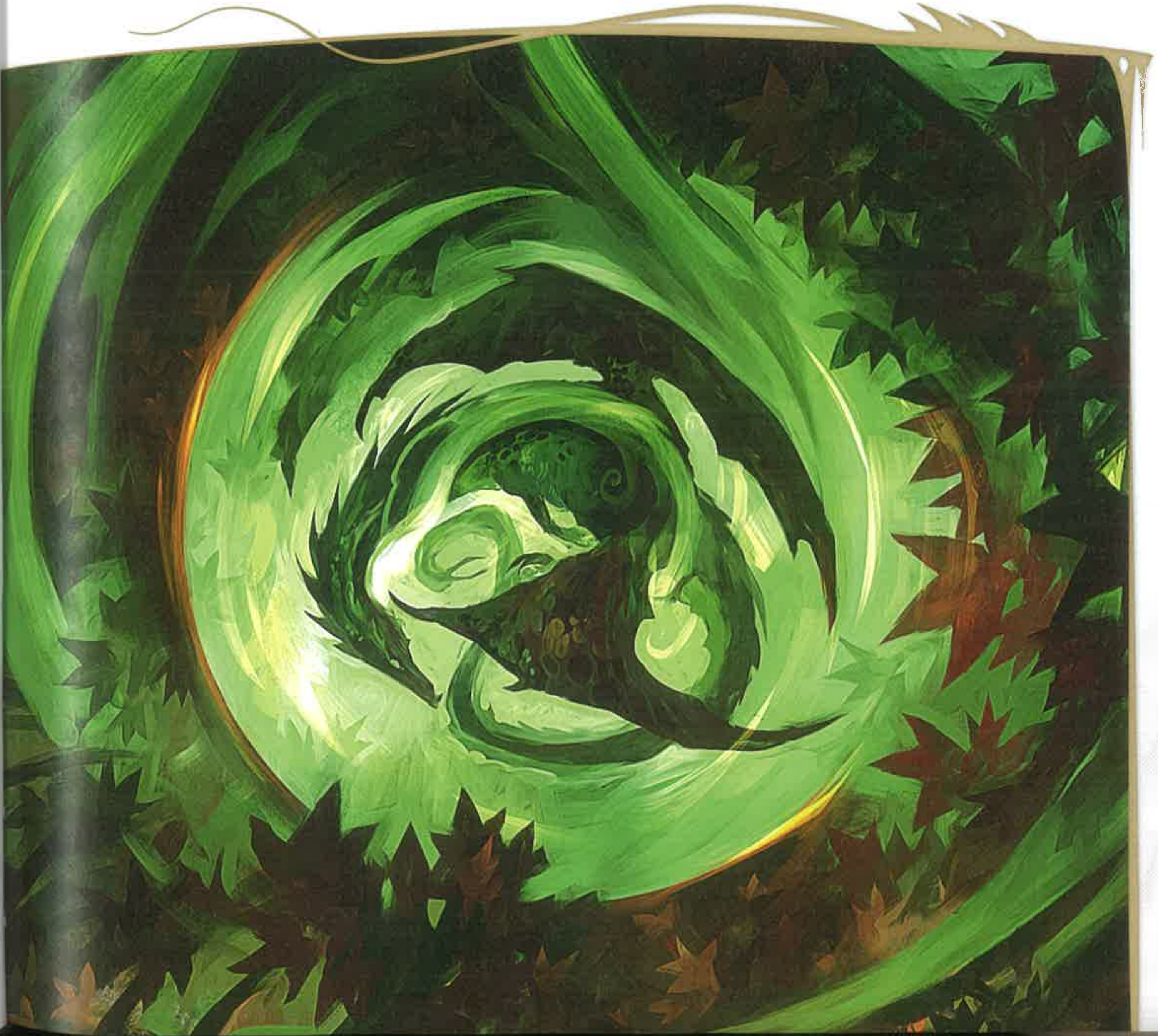
Conclusion

When the characters defeat Sunset-Is-Nigh, the villagers in Redwood Watch are overjoyed. The council hosts a party in the village green in the characters' honor. If the characters rescued Armin from Redwood Grove or the other elves from the dragon's lair, they are in attendance and lead cheers and songs about the characters' heroics. The council members offer the village's hospitality to the characters for as long as they wish.

With Sunset-Is-Nigh defeated, the corruption lifts from the forest. Redwood Grove's spirits quiet, and its stream is no longer poisoned. The blighted trees and foliage heal, and any surviving wicked creatures disperse.

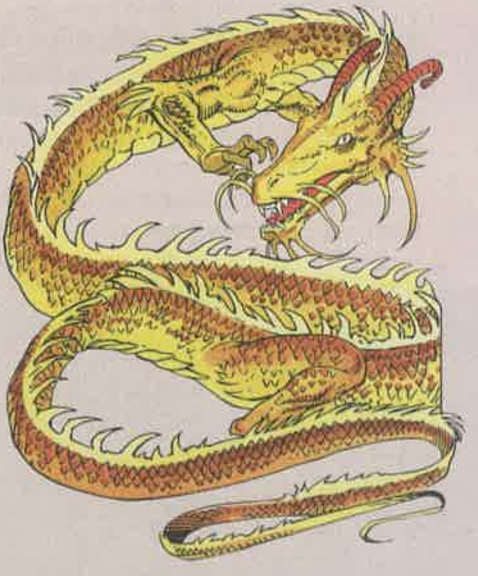
If the characters retrieved the sword Leafwarden, the council members insist the characters keep it as a token of the village's gratitude and a reminder of their impressive deed.

If the characters defeat the dragon, each of them earns an additional 400 XP, or you can simply advance them to level 3.

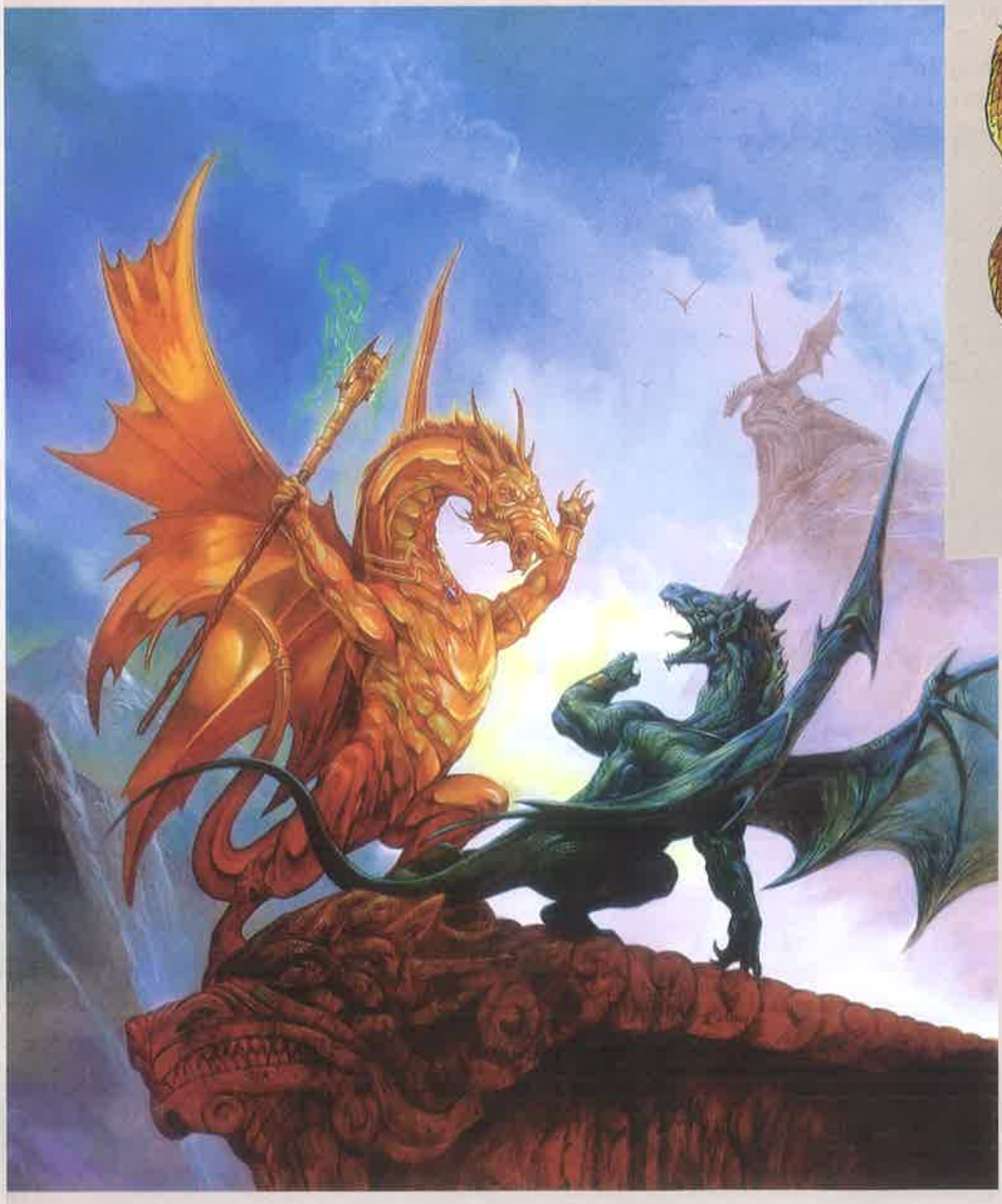


HISTORY OF
GOLD DRAGONS

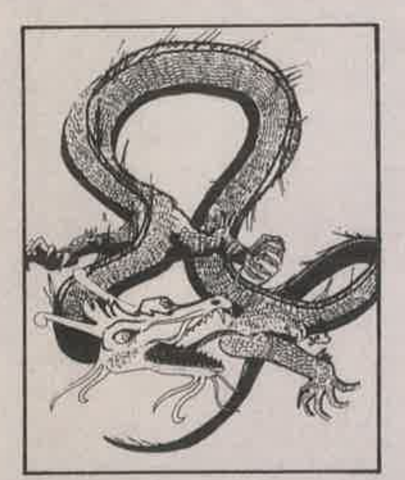
Originally wingless and serpentine, the look of gold dragons has varied more than any other dragon kind over D&D's history. Their appearance in the 2025 *Monster Manual* is an intentional nod to their original appearance.



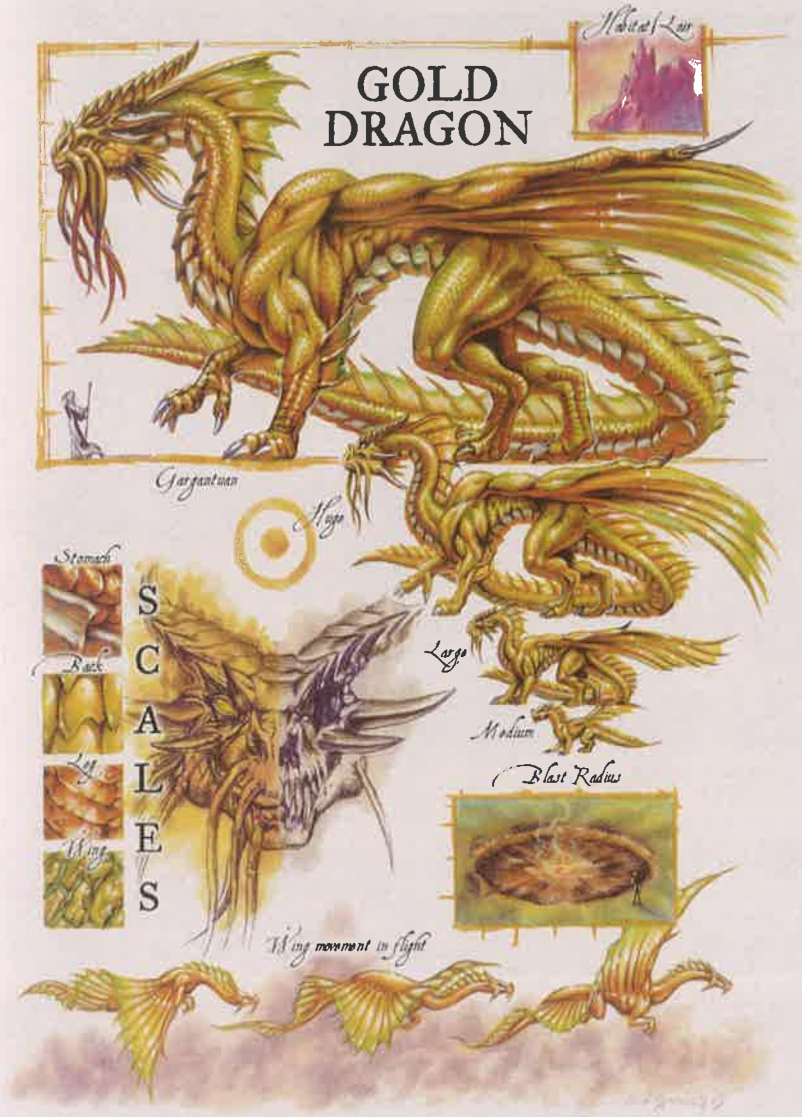
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



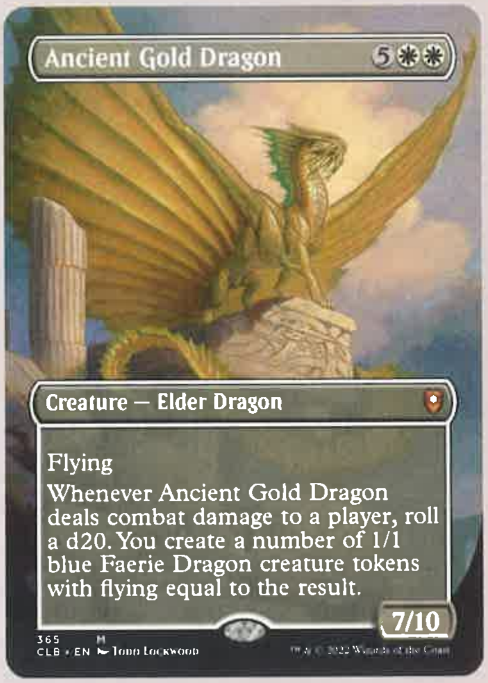
Council of Wyrms (1994)
Artist: Jeff Easley



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


Habitat/Lair
GOLD DRAGON
Gargantuan
Huge
Large
Medium
Stomach
Back
Leg
Wing
SCALES
Blast Radius
Wing movement in flight

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Ron Spencer



Ancient Gold Dragon 5 ✱✱

Creature — Elder Dragon

Flying

Whenever Ancient Gold Dragon deals combat damage to a player, roll a d20. You create a number of 1/1 blue Faerie Dragon creature tokens with flying equal to the result.

7/10

365 M
CLB • EN Todd Lockwood

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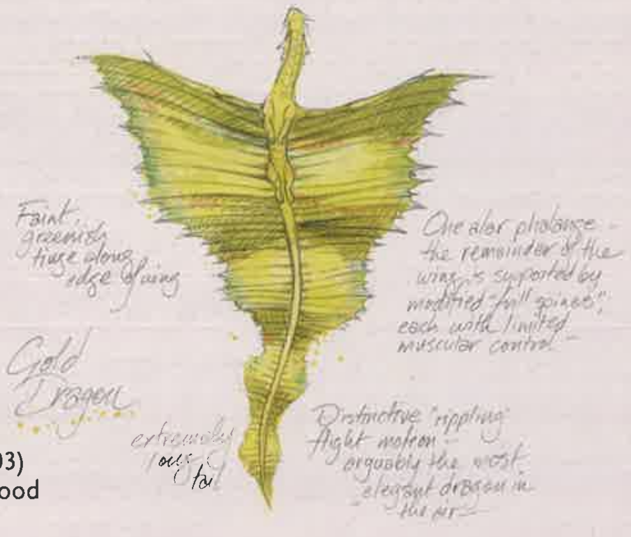
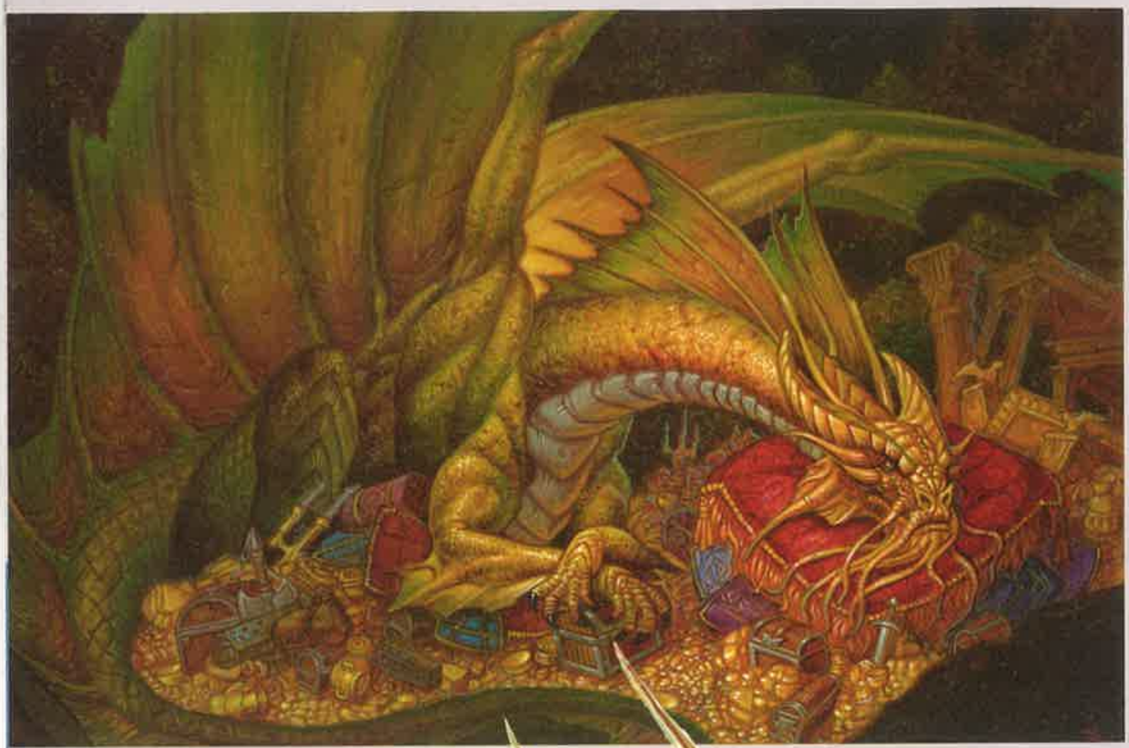
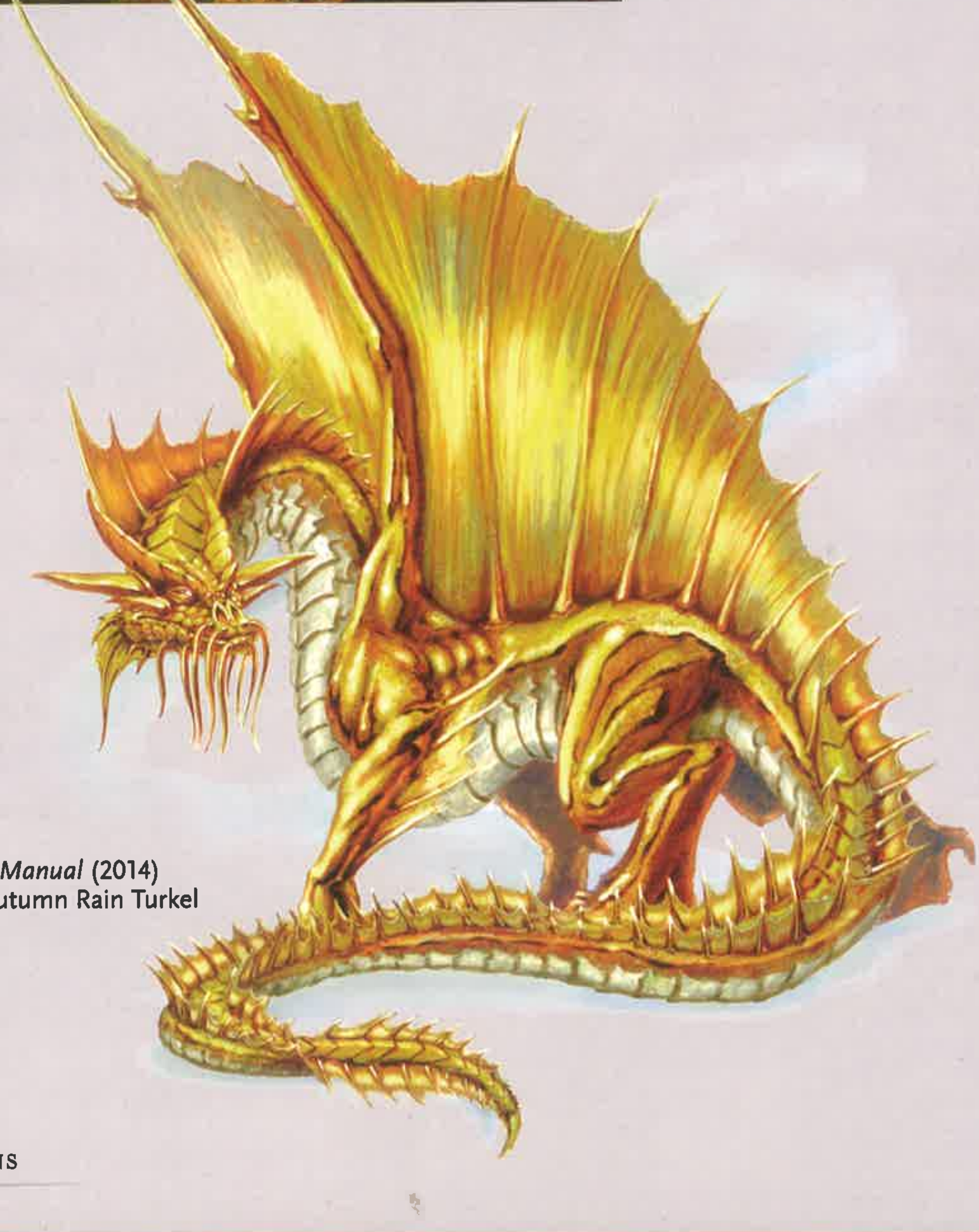
Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate (2022)
Artist: Todd Lockwood


Faint greenish tinge along edge of wing
One alar phalange - the remainder of the wing is supported by modified "fin" spines", each with limited muscular control -
Gold Dragon
extremely long tail
Distinctive "rippling" flight motion - arguably the most elegant dragon in the air -

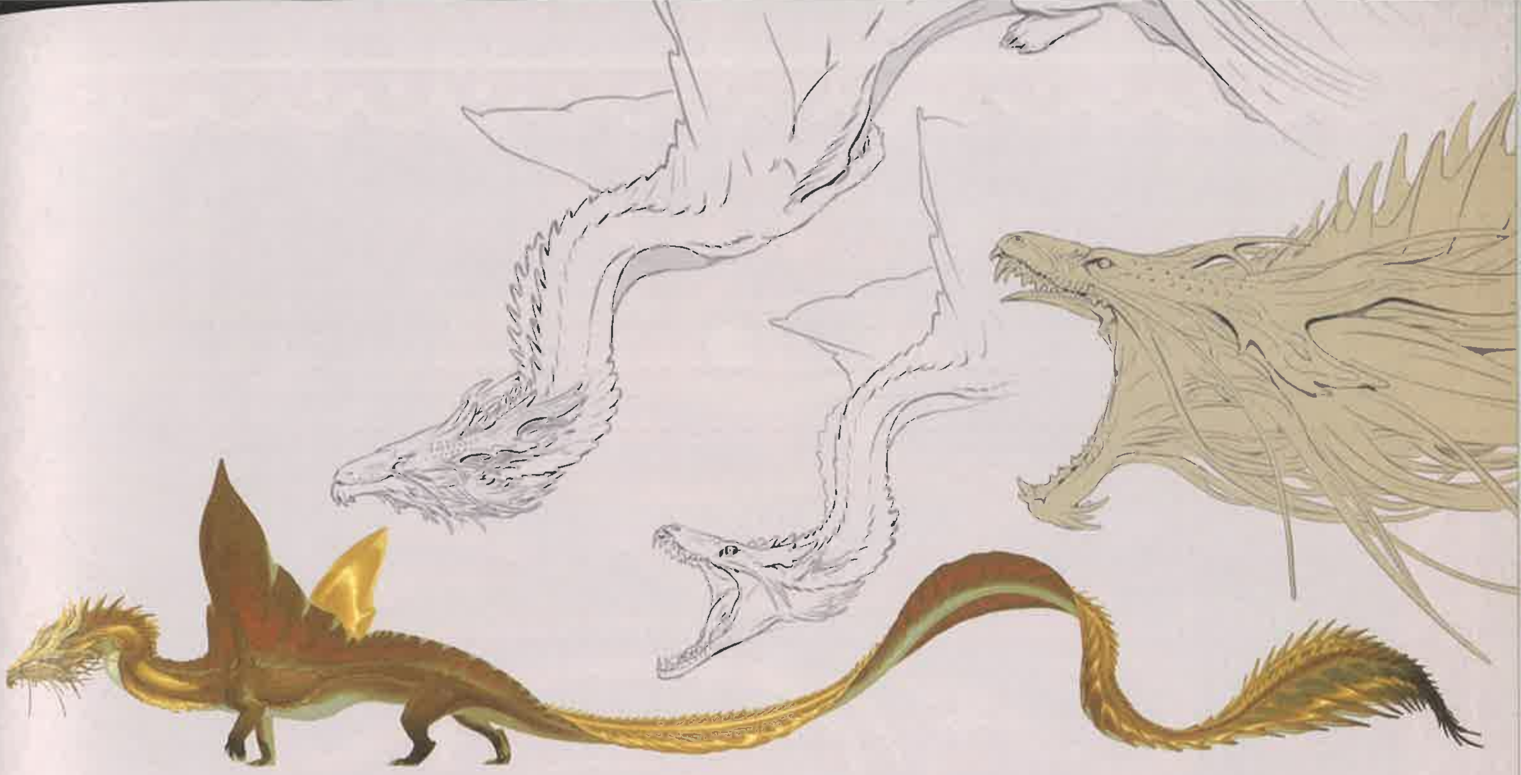
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



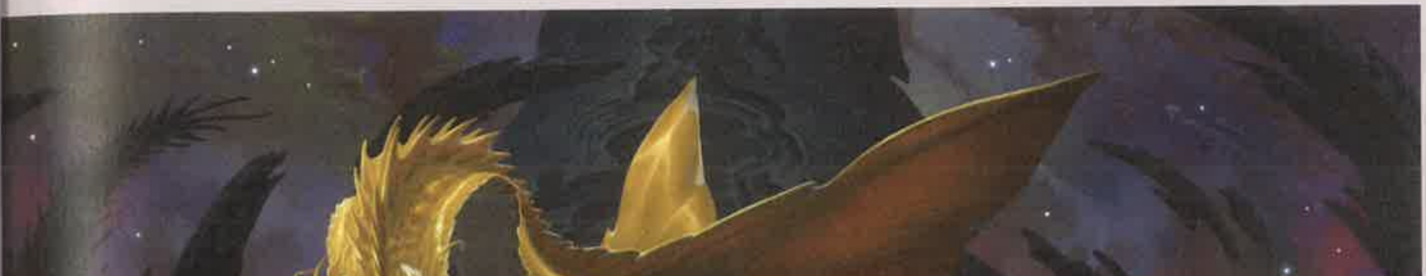
Monster Manual 2 (2009)
Artist: Chris Seaman



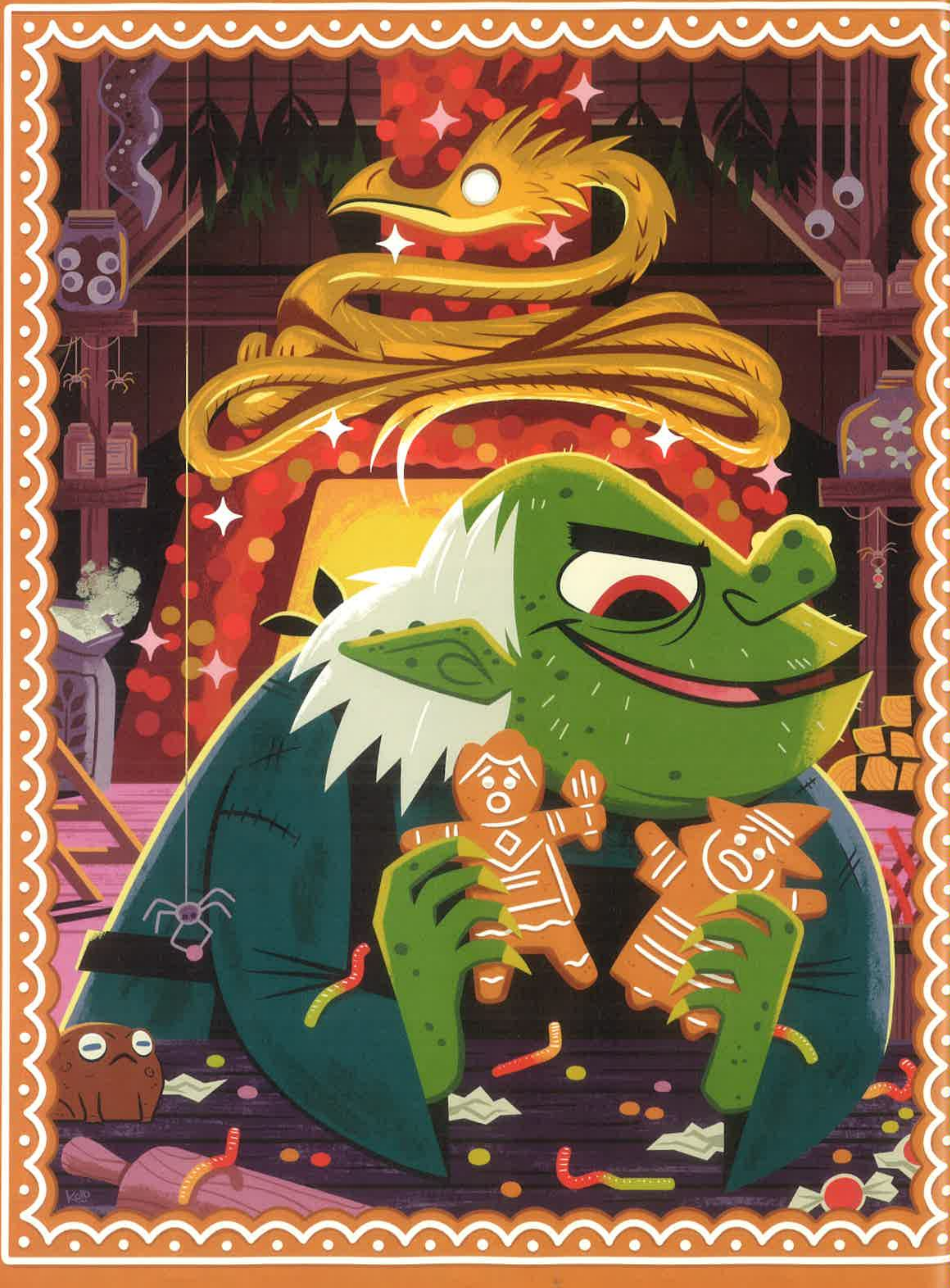
Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Autumn Rain Turkel



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



CHAPTER 2

Baker's Doesn't

AN ADVENTURE FOR **Level 3** CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN ANY VILLAGE WITH A NEARBY FOREST.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Confectionery Conflagration. The adventurers help a halfling confectioner named Edith Applegarth, whose shop is accidentally set ablaze by a gold dragon. Clues at the scene suggest the possible involvement of local baker Fill Flourforge, while an eyewitness saw the wyrmling flee into the forest. The characters might interrogate Fill or venture into the woods.

Fill's Bakery. Characters who visit Fill's bakery learn he has been raising the rambunctious wyrmling, named Briochebane, in secret. The dragon went to the confectionery that morning intending to frighten Edith, accidentally started the fire, then fled into the forest. Fill doesn't know where Briochebane is.

The Candy Cottage. Searching for Briochebane in the woods leads the characters to a candy cottage where a hag named Uncle Nibblecheek has captured the wyrmling. In confronting the hag, the characters discover that Edith made a pact with the hag years ago, trading her younger brother for a lifetime supply of candy.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. If you're running it for a single character, read the "Running for One Character" section.

Step 2. Read "Adventure Background."

Step 3. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table below. The characters will interact with these individuals throughout the adventure.

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Animated Rug of Smothering
Bandit
Bugbear Warrior
Cockatrice
Commoner
Dryad
Goblin Warrior
Gold Dragon Wyrmling
Green Hag
Mephit, Ice
Mummy
Ogre
Tough

Running for One Character

You can run this adventure for a single character of level 3. Ideally, that character should have proficiency in at least two of the following skills:

Athletics
Deception
History
Insight
Perception
Persuasion
Sleight of Hand
Stealth

The solo character gains the *Blessing of the Lone Champion* (see this book's introduction) to compensate for the lack of companions.

Key NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Asger Applegarth	Lost halfling wanderer	**Commoner** (Small)	C15
Briochebane	Dragon charmed by Uncle Nibblecheek	**Gold Dragon Wyrmling**	C10
Bubba Wugga	Animated doll	**Ogre** (with modifications)	C9
Edith Applegarth	Secretly wicked halfling confectioner	**Commoner** (Small, Neutral Evil)	"Rescuing Edith"
Fill Flourforge	Dwarf baker and retired brigand	**Bandit** (Medium)	"Arrival at the Bakery"
Uncle Nibblecheek	Sinister hag with a sweet tooth	**Green Hag**	C10

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Adventure Background

A small, cozy stop along a well-traveled road, the village of Hubbleton is home to friendly folk who enjoy the bread and pastries prepared by Fill Flourforge.

Unknown to these townsfolk, Fill uses dragon fire to bake his goods. When the unruly gold dragon wyrmling that Fill is raising goes missing the same day Hubbleton's newest confectionery goes up in smoke, the characters become embroiled in a fairy-tale plot that leads to the cottage of a hag with a detestable palate.

Three confectioners who cross paths with the gold dragon wyrmling are baked into this adventure's plot.

Edith Applegarth

When she was a girl, Edith and her younger brother, Asger, wandered into the forest and became lost. Far from home, they discovered a trail of colorful candies, which they followed to a cottage tucked in the woods. Unknown to them, this was the home of Uncle Nibblecheek, an evil hag who delighted in devouring visitors to his cottage. Appearing to Edith and Asger as a kindly grandfather, Uncle Nibblecheek invited the children in.

Edith slowly saw through Uncle Nibblecheek's ruse and refused to fall prey to the hag's grisly appetite. A clever and selfish child, Edith made a pact with the hag, trading her little brother for all the candy she could ever want for herself. Impressed at Edith's wit and callous resolve, the hag accepted, and Edith departed the cottage alone.

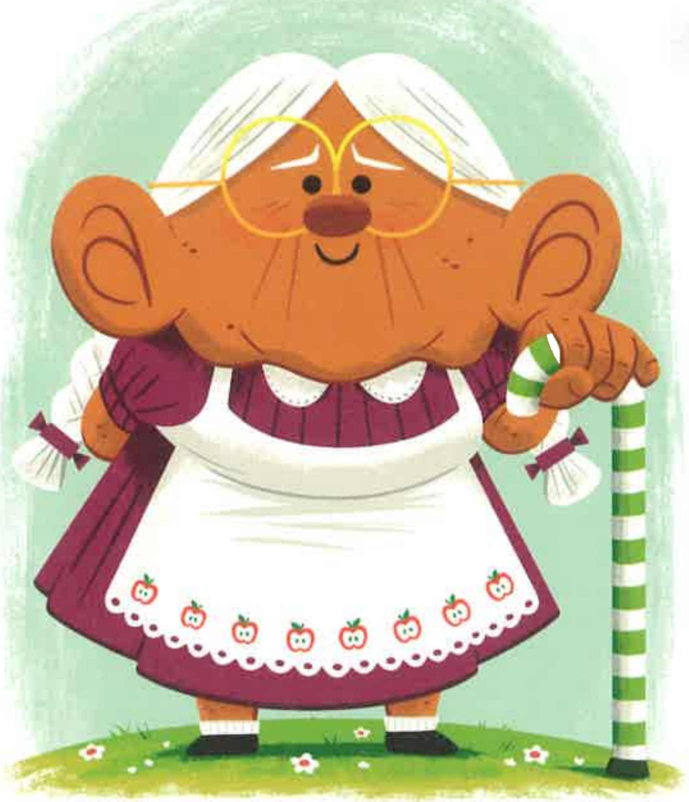
Edith never set foot in the cottage again and doesn't know what happened to her brother after she left. In truth, Uncle Nibblecheek turned Asger into a candy creature and forced him to work as a kitchen helper.

Over many years, Edith has leveraged her pact with Uncle Nibblecheek into a booming business. Decades after their encounter, she still collects candy from the hag and sells it in confectioneries throughout the land.

In exchange for a steady supply of candy for her shop, Edith sizes up customers as potential victims for the hag. Edith sends rubes and otherwise unpleasant folk on errands to the hag's cottage, which she falsely claims is owned by her older sister. To avoid drawing suspicion, Edith moves her shop to a new town every few years.

Fill Flourforge

Fill Flourforge, a retired dwarf brigand, loves to bake. Fill's criminal career came to a halt when a gold dragon burned the rest of his band of thieves to a crisp during their botched attempt to steal from the dragon's hoard. Though Fill was the only survivor, the mission wasn't a total failure. The dwarf escaped the lair with his life, a small fortune, and one priceless reward: a gold dragon's egg.



Rather than continue his banditry, Fill used the spoils from this heist to establish a bakery. In time, the egg hatched near the warmth of his oven. Fill named the wyrmling that emerged Briochebane and raised her as his ward. When the bakery first opened, Fill's desserts were met with mixed reception, but with the help of Briochebane, who became his new baking assistant, Fill's pastries have achieved local renown. This is especially true of his cinnamon rolls, which are toasted to perfection with dragon fire.

Fill keeps Briochebane's existence secret. He worries that others would fear the dragon or, worse, try to trap or slay her.

Uncle Nibblecheek

In the woods outside Hubbleton stands the cottage of Uncle Nibblecheek, a green hag with a sinister sweet tooth. A trail of candy winds through a tangled forest to the sugary shack, luring gullible and peckish travelers who stray from the beaten path to the hag's doorstep. Visitors are always welcome.

Once guests are inside, Uncle Nibblecheek treats them to an assortment of freshly baked delights,

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fattening them up and lulling them into sugar-induced stupors. Then, aided by a menagerie of candy creatures and an arsenal of magical confectionery equipment, Uncle Nibblecheek transforms his victims into sugary treats and gobbles them up.

Confectionery Conflagration

To begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following text aloud:

> A well-worn dirt road snakes through the village of Hubbleton, a community of crafters, farmers, and lumberjacks gathered in simple buildings amid a forested landscape. Locals are hardworking and polite, acknowledging you with a smile or a nod as you make your way through the village.
>
> As you round a corner, a plume of black smoke catches your eye! It rises from a squat log building near the edge of the woods. As flames engulf the wooden roof, the stench of burnt sugar fills the air, and a faint voice from inside cries, "Help! Help!"

Hubbleton's newest confectionery has been set ablaze with its owner trapped inside. The fire was accidentally started by the wyrmling Briochebane. Fiercely protective of her guardian, Fill Flourforge, Briochebane misinterpreted his complaints about the candy store luring away customers as meaning Edith had threatened Fill. Briochebane meant to scare Edith into leaving Fill alone, but accidentally set fire to the confectionery. The panicking dragon fled into the woods.

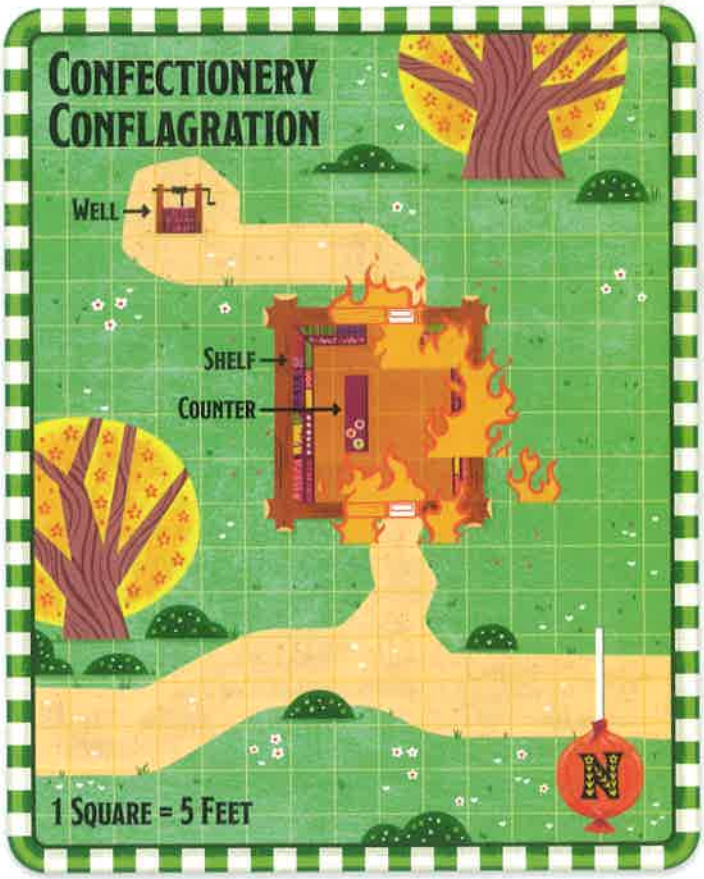
Confectionery Layout

The confectionery (shown on map 2.1) is a humble, 20-foot-square log cabin with a single floor and a sparse interior. It has two entrances, one in the front and another in the back, both of which are unlocked. The building contains no kitchen, as Edith sources her candy from Uncle Nibblecheek.

Putting Out the Fire

The fire reduces the confectionery to a pile of smoldering wreckage after 10 minutes unless the characters take action to extinguish it. The characters can put out the fire in the following ways:

Bucket Brigade. A character can take the Influence action to rally townsfolk and make a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. On a success, the townsfolk form a bucket brigade. The group draws water from a nearby well and puts out the fire in 5 minutes.



MAP 2.1: CONFECTIONERY CONFLAGRATION

Magic. Water created by the *Create or Destroy Water* spell or a similar effect douses the flames.

Rescuing Edith

Once the characters have dealt with the fire, they can safely rescue Edith from the confectionery. A character who attempts to save Edith without first extinguishing the fire makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) Fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Once inside, a character searching for Edith finds the halfling woman cowering under a counter of once-smiling lollipops that have melted into grotesque, elongated faces. The character then can escort Edith from the confectionery (no ability check required).

Edith (Small, Neutral Evil **Commoner**) is in her golden years. She wears spectacles and frumpy clothing and sports braided pigtails that suggest her youthful personality. Edith is Friendly toward her rescuers.

If the characters don't move to rescue Edith, two heroic townsfolk brave the fire and retrieve the confectioner from the burning building. Regardless of whether townsfolk or the characters save Edith, her rescuers emerge to cheers from an audience of emotionally invested onlookers.

After the Fire

If the characters fought the fire, it was a minor setback for Edith's business; if not, her confectionery is destroyed. Either way, she approaches the characters after the event:

> Edith Applegarth stands in front of her smoking confectionery, its beams blackened by soot. "Oh dear, what an awful day! Who could have done such a rotten thing?"

Edith's puzzlement is genuine. She doesn't know who or what caused the fire, but she's certain it wasn't her.

If the characters played a part in her rescue, she thanks them for saving her life. Edith then asks the characters to find the culprit so she can report them to the proper authorities. In exchange for the party's services, Edith promises each character 10 GP and a batch of their favorite dessert, adding that she wishes she could offer more.

Should they accept, Edith suggests they start by asking around or checking for signs of a break-in. In any case, Edith remains at the site to assess the damage and doesn't accompany them further.

Gathering Clues

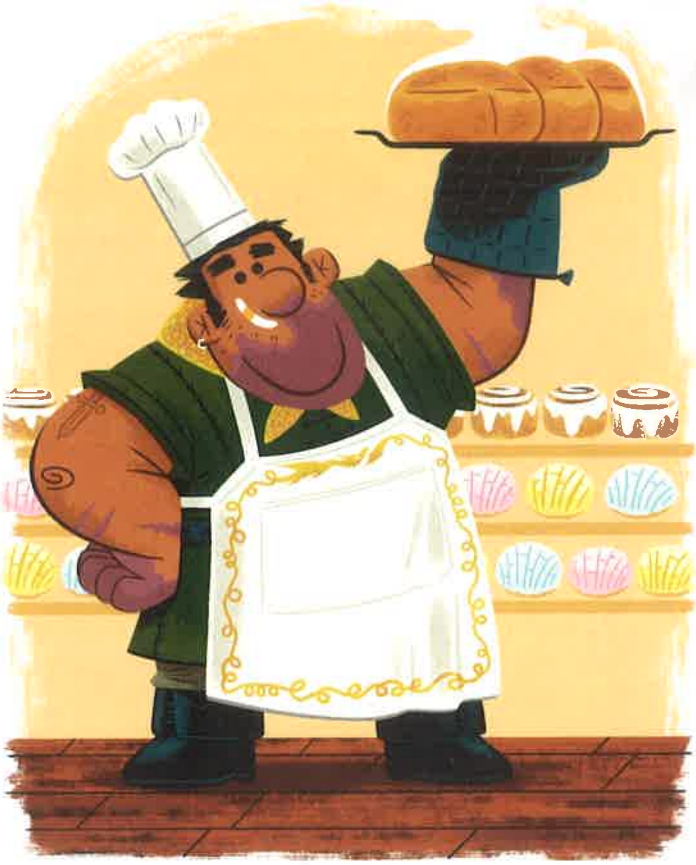
The characters can glean the following clues in or around the ruined confectionery.

Burnt Roll. A character who takes the Search action and succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a half-eaten and slightly charred cinnamon roll in the grass behind the confectionery. Asking around town or taking a subsequent Study action and succeeding on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check reveals the roll was made at a local bakery owned by a dwarf named Fill Flourforge (see "Fill's Bakery").

Family Portrait. A character who searches the confectionery's interior (or its ashes, if it burned down) finds a scorched painting of Edith and her younger brother, Asger, when they were children. If the picture is returned to her, Edith sheds a tear and explains that, when she was a girl, her brother "disappeared into the woods and never came home." She doesn't elaborate.

Foul Play. If pressed to name a possible suspect, Edith or another townsperson reluctantly suggests that Fill Flourforge, a local baker, might benefit from being the sole purveyor of sweets in town.

Unreliable Witness. If the characters solicit eyewitness accounts from bystanders, a drunken human woman of dubious credibility claims she noticed a "golden lizard" fly into the woods after the fire broke out. This witness, named Peetra Sylver, then rants about the time she was abducted by troglodytes and nobody believed her.



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Next Steps

Depending on the clues they collected, the characters might decide to investigate the bakery or head into the woods in pursuit of the creature that fled the fire. If the characters start with the bakery, see "Fill's Bakery"; if they start with the forest, jump ahead to "The Candy Cottage."

Fill's Bakery

Most of Hubbleton's residents buy their bread from Fill's bakery. Located near the center of town, this quaint, two-story establishment caters to hungry travelers and industrious locals.

When not tending to customers, Fill usually can be found in the kitchen, experimenting with new recipes and preparing his shop's daily assortment of baked goods.

Bakery Layout

From the outside, the bakery (shown on map 2.2) resembles a giant loaf of bread. The ground floor contains the kitchen, pantry, and storefront. The upper floor has living quarters for Fill and his secret dragon sous-chef, Briochebane.

Arrival at the Bakery

When the characters enter the bakery, read or paraphrase the following text:

> A brass bell rings as you enter this charming bakery. Sunlight filters through small windows, illuminating an array of brightly colored sweets, flour-dusted loaves, and golden pastries neatly arranged on maple shelves. The scent of freshly baked bread fills the air.
>
> A dwarf with bushy eyebrows and a clean-shaven face emerges from the kitchen with a tray of cinnamon rolls. "Good day," he says as he places the pastries on a shelf. "How can I help you?"

Fill Flourforge (Medium **Bandit**) wears a flour-stained apron. He is Friendly and welcomes all customers warmly.

Fill makes small talk with the characters as he tries to sell them baked treats (see "What's for Sale?"). If they tell Fill about the fire at Edith's confectionery, he seems visibly shocked. The baker fervently denies any accusations of arson and replies that plenty of customers can testify he was present at his bakery during the event. However, a character who listens to Fill's alibi and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check discerns that he's withholding something.

A character can pry more information from Fill by taking the Influence action and making a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. On a success, Fill explains the full story (see "Dragon Dilemma"). A character who presents the half-eaten roll found outside the confectionery automatically succeeds on this check. On a failed check, Fill sticks to his story, but the characters can try again.

What's for Sale?

Fill makes an honest living selling breads and pastries. His offerings and their prices are summarized in the Baked Goods table below.

BAKED GOODS

Item	Price
Cinnamon roll	1 SP (1 GP for a dozen)
Sweet bread (with blue, pink, or yellow frosting)	3 CP
Loaf of bread	2 CP

Dragon Dilemma

Once Fill believes he can trust the characters—or feels he has no other choice—he reveals the following information:

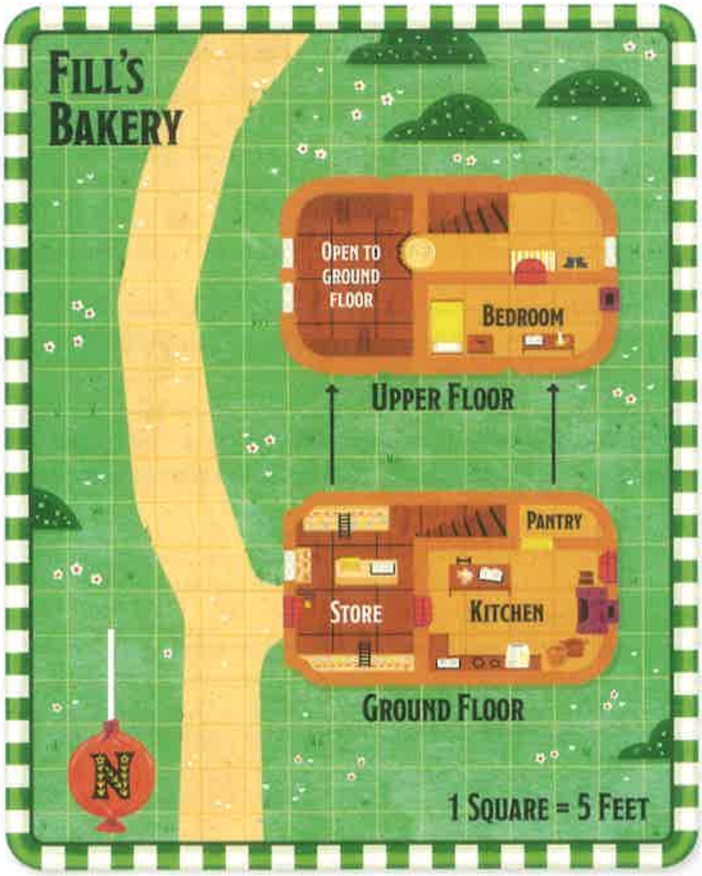
Past Life. Fill used to be a brigand. His last heist nearly cost him his life, but he escaped with a gold dragon egg and enough coin to fund his bakery and give up banditry altogether.

Secret Ingredient. Fill's pastries are toasted with dragon fire, a closely guarded secret ingredient produced by a gold dragon Fill is raising behind closed doors. In recent months, Fill has struggled to keep the growing dragon, whose name is Briochebane, hidden from the public.

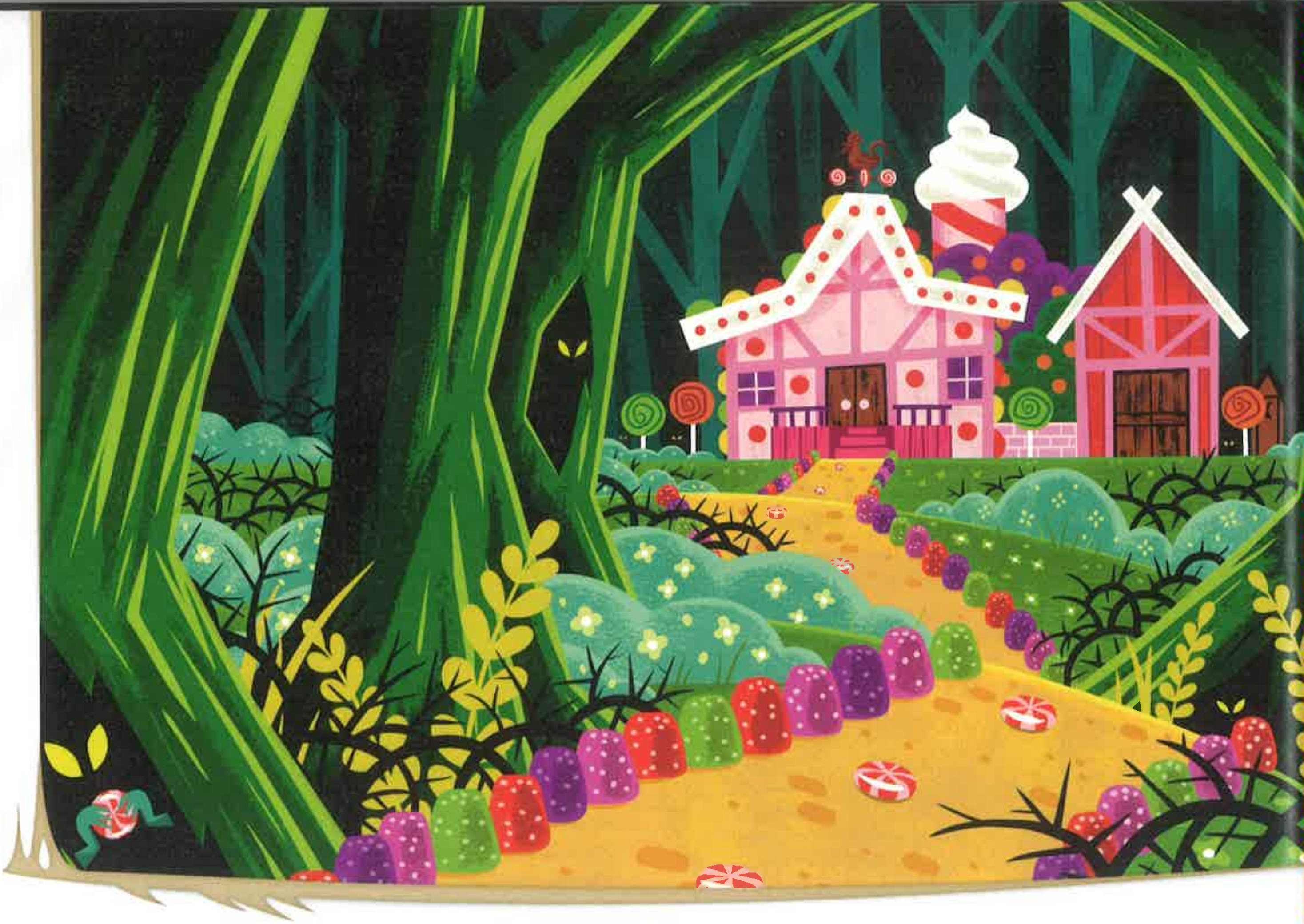
Missing Dragon. After toasting this morning's rolls, Briochebane disappeared. Fill worries the dragon might be responsible for the confectionery fire. If that's the case, Fill vows to fund its reconstruction anonymously.

Fill's Quest

After imparting the information above, Fill beseeches the characters to find Briochebane and bring his ward home unharmed. He implores them not to slay the dragon—she's the only family he has. Upon Briochebane's safe return, Fill promises to reward the characters with 100 GP from his stashed loot from his former life of crime.



MAP 2.2: FILL'S BAKERY



If the characters accept, Fill tells them Briochebane likes to frolic and hunt in the woods east of town. He then hands the characters a sack containing three warm cinnamon rolls—Briochebane's favorite dessert—to coax the dragon into returning to the bakery. Fill stresses that the characters are not to eat the rolls, or the dragon might not heed their commands. If they want their own, Fill will give each character one free roll.

If the characters refuse, Fill asks only that the characters not reveal the secrets he shared with them. Before they depart, the baker mentions that Briochebane is like good bread: crusty on the outside but soft on the inside. He reiterates his fervent request that the characters not harm her.

The Candy Cottage

East of Hubbleton lies an untamed stretch of lofty trees teeming with wildlife.

After setting fire to Edith's confectionery, Briochebane fled into the forest, where she caught the scent of a trail of candy and indulged her sweet tooth, but the trail led her into the clutches of the hag Uncle Nibblecheek. The characters' investigation leads them down the same path.

Uncle Nibblecheek's cottage stands in a picturesque grove far from Hubbleton.

Candy Trail

When the characters enter the forest, read or paraphrase the following text:

> Beyond Hubbleton spreads a dense forest. Giant trees tower above. Woodland critters nest in these ancient trunks, and moss hangs from their limbs like long, green beards. The air feels crisp and fresh.
>
> After some brief wandering, you stumble on a trail dotted with colorful candies. The candy trail leads deeper into the forest.

After following the trail for an hour, the characters arrive at Uncle Nibblecheek's candy cottage.

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Arriving at the Cottage

When the characters reach the cottage, read or paraphrase the following text:

> The candy trail ends at a sprawling cottage deep in the woods. A medley of sweet aromas wafts from the structure, and a mélange of confections decorates its exterior: lollipops, taffy, truffles, and other bite-size delights. Colorful sheets of sugar glass form its windowpanes, planks of pink wafers line its front porch, and its roof is thatched with licorice.
>
> A squat peppermint tower topped with a swirl of thick icing rises from the back of the cottage. East of the cottage is a small red barn, and an outhouse stands near the edge of the forest to the north. Both are made from chocolate planks.

Characters can freely devour the sweets that adorn the cottage. A consumed sweet is magically replaced after 10 minutes. A character who samples any of the confections on the cottage's exterior feels a strong desire to enter the cottage but can resist the temptation.

Candy Creatures

Some effects in the cottage can alter a creature's form, along with all nonmagical items it's wearing or carrying—turning them into animate candy. When a character is turned into animate candy, the text specifies the kind of candy.

A creature in candy form doesn't age, but the transformation has no effect on its statistics. Candy armor is just as resilient as normal armor of its kind, and a candy weapon is just as lethal and sturdy as its ordinary counterpart.

A candy creature reverts to its normal form if targeted by the *Greater Restoration* spell or if Uncle Nibblecheek dies. As a Magic action, the hag can revert one creature he touches. If a candy creature is subjected to another effect that also would alter its target into candy, that creature isn't altered again but suffers all other consequences as normal.

Cottage Features

Unless otherwise specified, the cottage has the following features.

Ceilings

The cottage's ceilings are 10 feet high except in the tower (area C12), where the ceiling is 20 feet high. All ceilings are covered with a layer of sweet icing.

Doors

Doors throughout the cottage are thick bars of chocolate etched with wood grain designs. Each chocolate door is unlocked and as strong as a wooden door.

Edible Objects

With a few exceptions noted in the text, all objects in the cottage that belong to Uncle Nibblecheek are made of candy. These objects are as usable and resilient as their non-edible counterparts.

Lighting

Each room in the cottage is filled with Bright Light from a magical gumball lamp. Consuming a gumball or removing it from the cottage extinguishes its light.

Cottage Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 2.3.

C1: Porch

> A covered porch, its planks composed of bright pink wafers, extends from the front of the cottage. The front door consists of matching slabs of chocolate sculpted to resemble wood. In front of the double door, a doormat made of fruit leather reads, "Please Wipe Your Feet." A candy rocking chair faces the forest.

The doormat is an **Animated Rug of Smothering** made of soft candy. It attacks visitors who don't wipe their feet before entering the cottage. Otherwise, the rug remains motionless.

C2: Foyer

> Candy aromas greet you in this modest foyer. Coats and cloaks hang just inside the threshold, above boots and shoes of different sizes. To the east is a sitting room filled with candy furniture. To the west lies a child's playroom.

The garments and footwear belong to visitors who never left the cottage.

C3: Bubba Wugga's Playroom

> Colorful toys litter this spacious playroom. A giant, empty cradle lies toppled on the floor.

This playroom and its contents belong to Bubba Wugga, a sapient doll created by Uncle Nibblecheek. Bubba Wugga (see area C9) usually sleeps in the cradle, which is big enough to hold an ogre-size baby comfortably.

Toys. The room boasts an impressive array of toys, many of which are larger than their typical counterparts: dress-up kits, figurines, prop weapons, and a rocking horse as big as a full-grown horse. Riding the rocking horse triggers a *Magic Mouth* spell that causes the horse to whinny and loudly exclaim, "Hot dog!" several times.

Treasure. Amid the toys is a *Bag of Tricks* (gray). A character who takes the Search action and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the bag.

C4: Sitting Room

> This room contains furniture made of candy, including a couch, two chairs, and a low table. Delicate candy teacups rest on white sugar doilies along the table's edge. A candy teakettle hangs in the hearth over a crackling fire, whistling gently.

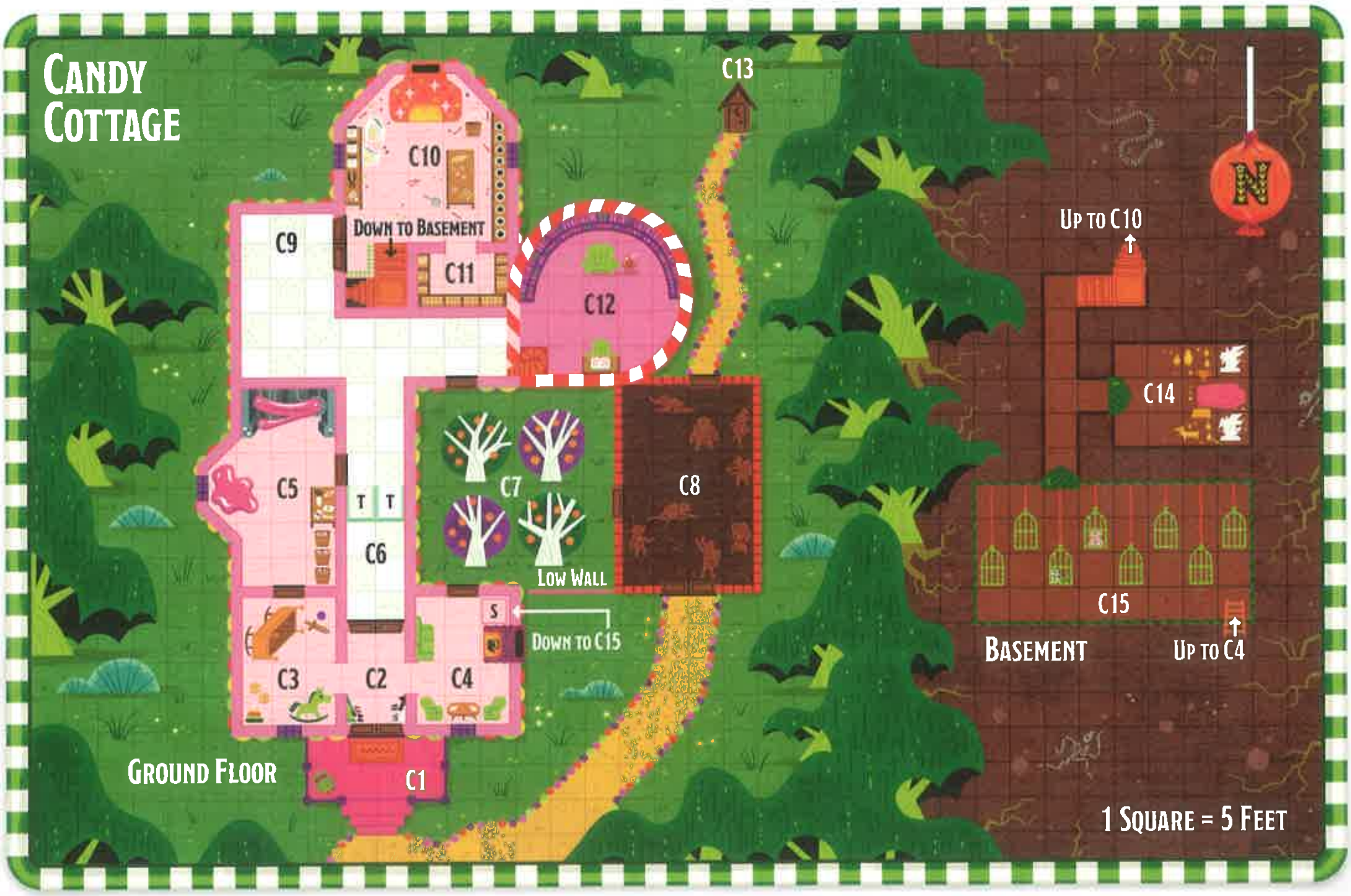
Uncle Nibblecheek occasionally entertains guests in this sitting room.

Secret Trapdoor. In the northeast corner, a trapdoor is cleverly hidden in the floor. Any character who takes 1 minute to search the room for secret doors finds the trapdoor with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trapdoor pulls open to reveal a candy ladder that descends to the dungeon (area C15).

C5: Taffy Factory

> Rhythmic, rubbery slapping sounds fill this noisy room. Two burly, fur-covered humanoids wearing gloves and hairnets heap globs of a gum-like substance into a contraption at the back of the room. The machine's frenzied mechanical arms stretch and twist the brightly colored substance into ropes of taffy. Meanwhile, a third worker snips the taffy, wraps it, and sorts it by flavor into one of three buckets.

Three **Bugbear Warriors** make taffy in this room. The bugbears work for Uncle Nibblecheek and are



Map 2.3: Candy Cottage

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Hostile toward intruders. In combat, they attempt to shove characters into the taffy puller (described below).

A character can take the Influence action and make a DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check to try to fool the bugbears into thinking the character is a guest of Uncle Nibblecheek. Bugbears fooled into believing this lie become Indifferent toward that character.

Taffy. Inside each of the three candy buckets are one hundred wrapped pieces of saltwater taffy. The characters can use the taffy to appease Bubba Wugga (see area C9).

A large blob of unstretched, unwrapped taffy lies on the floor by the window on the west wall. A creature that enters a square shared by this blob of taffy for the first time on a turn or that ends its turn there must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or have the Restrained condition until the end of its next turn.

Taffy Puller. Standing against the north wall is a candy contraption that magically stretches its contents into saltwater taffy. Any creature that starts its turn in the space occupied by the taffy puller's arms must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 9 (2d8) Bludgeoning damage and be altered into a candy creature (see "Candy Creatures"). In this state, the creature has a soft, slightly elastic taffy form.

C6: Trapped Hallway

> Peppermint-flecked tiles checker the floor of this long hallway, which has been generously sprinkled with flour.

A pressure plate spans the width of the hall near its midpoint, as denoted on the map. Any character who searches the floor for traps and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the pressure plate.

When a creature steps on the pressure plate, a 5-foot-long, 10-foot-wide wooden rolling pin falls from the ceiling at the north end of the hall and rolls the length of the hallway, flattening creatures in its path. Each creature in the hallway must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage, have the Prone condition, and be altered into a candy creature (see "Candy Creatures"). While candied, the creature has a flat gingerbread form.

The rolling pin stops at the south end of the hall.

C7: Candied Apple Orchard

> Nestled in this courtyard are four trees with peppermint bark. Candied apples dangle from their delicate white branches. A four-foot-high wall made of bubblegum bricks blocks off an opening to the south.

Natural light fills this courtyard. Scaling the low wall is easy but costs an extra 5 feet of movement.

Three candy **Dryads** (see "Candy Creatures") hide within the trees, watching for interlopers. A character who surveys the trees and succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a dryad.

Candied Apples. If the characters attempt to pick any of the candied apples, one candy dryad ceases hiding and issues the following warning in Elvish:

> "Halt! These candied apples are reserved for children and the beasts of the wild. Stay your hand, or face nature's wrath."

Each day, the trees in this area magically sprout 1d10 crisp apples coated in a brittle, sugary shell. The apples' stems are candy sticks that facilitate consumption. The characters can use these candied apples to appease Bubba Wugga (see area C9).

The dryads fight characters who ignore their command, but they allow children and animals to freely partake of the apples. Characters who wish to avoid a fight can obtain apples through a variety of clever means:

- By shape-shifting into a woodland animal
- By freeing Asger, a child trapped in the dungeon (area C15), and asking him for help
- By succeeding on DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks, with one apple pilfered per success
- By recruiting a woodland critter from the surrounding forest using the *Speak with Animals* spell or by making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check

C8: Chocatrice Barn

> Eight chocolate statues are situated throughout this rustic barn. The statues depict humanoids with agonized expressions. Four mangy, cocoa-feathered birds bob about the statues, squawking and pecking at the chocolate figures. A nest made of white, shredded dough sits on the ground behind the northernmost statue.

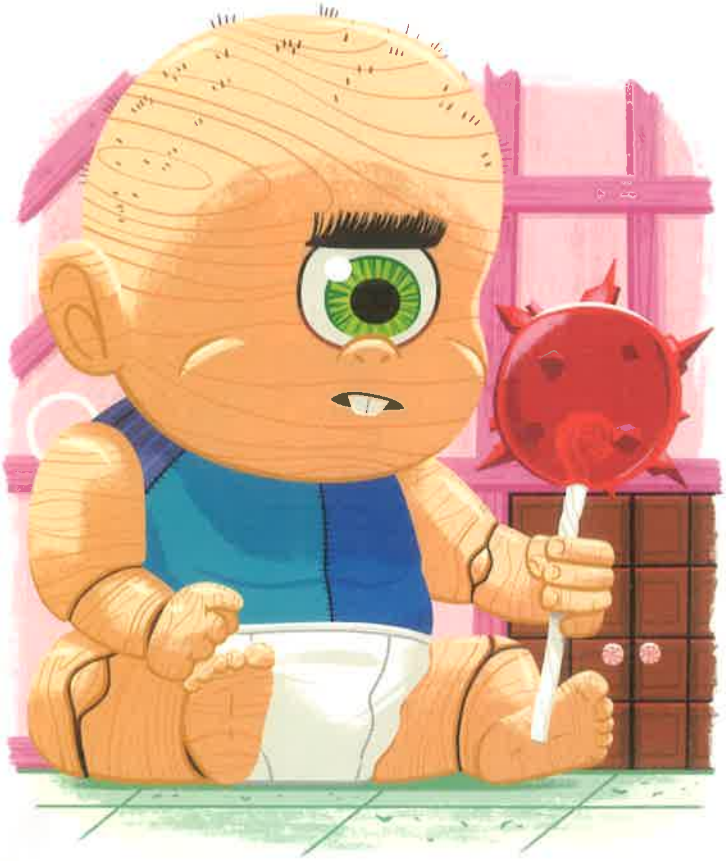
Four chocatrices dwell in this barn and attack intruders on sight. Each one uses the **Cockatrice** stat block, but a creature who gains the Petrified condition from its Petrifying Bite turns to chocolate instead of stone.

Chocolate Eggs. A nest of shredded phyllo dough behind the northernmost statue contains a clutch of six crème-filled chocolate eggs, which the characters can use to appease Bubba Wugga (see area C9).

Statues. The statues are the chocolate remains of hikers, hunters, lumberjacks, and other hapless travelers. Each is riddled with tiny holes from the chocatrices' beaks; a few are missing fingers and toes.

C9: Bubba Wugga

> A giant, diapered baby doll sits in front of a double door made of hinged chocolate bars. Even while seated, the doll is more than seven feet tall. It grasps a menacing-looking lollipop, and a single cyclopic eye peers out of the doll's face. It gazes in your direction.
>
> "Sowwy," booms the one-eyed doll smugly. "Kitchen's cwosed."



The doll, Bubba Wugga, is positioned in front of the double door and refuses to let visitors enter the kitchen (area C10), per Uncle Nibblecheek's instructions. Bubba Wugga is a Construct that knows Common and Elvish; it otherwise uses the **Ogre** stat block. It wields a lollipop-shaped Greatclub and succeeds automatically on saving throws against spells that compel it to disobey Uncle Nibblecheek's orders.

If Bubba Wugga defeats the characters in combat, they awaken as prisoners in the dungeon (area C15) with 1 Hit Point each.

Only candy can make Bubba Wugga ignore the hag's instructions. To convince the doll to stand aside, the characters must bring it three different candies from elsewhere in the cottage. Bubba Wugga gladly tells the characters its favorite candies and where to find them, as outlined in the Bubba Wugga's Favorite Candies table. The doll doesn't accept any substitutions. Upon receiving the candies, Bubba Wugga gathers its spoils, squeezes its way past the characters, and retires to its playroom (area C3), carefully stepping over the pressure plate in the hall (area C6).

BUBBA WUGGA'S FAVORITE CANDIES

Candy	Location
Candied apple	Candied apple orchard (area C7)
Chocolate egg	Chocatrice barn (area C8)
Gingerbread	Striped dungeon (area C15)
Gummy pillow	Gummy mummy's tomb (area C14)
Saltwater taffy	Taffy factory (area C5)

C10: Candy Kitchen

> A toothless hag resembling a ghastly, green-skinned old man in a stained baking apron dashes between pots of boiling sugar and cluttered countertops. Chocolate toads, glittery jars of still-fluttering gossamer wings, and other bizarre-looking ingredients crowd the work surfaces. In the southwest corner, a staircase made of chocolate planks leads downward.
>
> The kitchen's main feature is a massive, wood-fired, metal oven festooned with rubies. Its hinged door is open, revealing roaring flames.

> Curled atop the oven lies a gold dragon the size of a large dog. The dragon's eyes look cloudy and white.
>
> The hag senses your intrusion, whips around, and says, "Hey! Who let you in here?"

Uncle Nibblecheek, an irritable **Green Hag**, works in this busy kitchen. The hag is initially Indifferent toward the characters but can't abide guests in his kitchen; the longer they linger here, the more irritable he becomes until his attitude shifts to Hostile.

If the characters fight Uncle Nibblecheek, he claps his hands and commands the dragon wyrmling to defend him (see "Briochebane" below). The hag then fights until Bloodied, at which point he bargains for his life (see "Parleying with the Hag"). If Uncle Nibblecheek is slain, all creatures candied by his magic (see "Candied Creatures") revert to their former forms.

Fighting both the dragon and the hag might not end in the characters' favor. If the characters are defeated, they wake up imprisoned in the dungeon (area C15), each with 1 Hit Point.

Briochebane. Briochebane, Fill's trusted ward and baking companion, is a **Gold Dragon Wyrmling** that knows Common and Dwarvish. When she came upon the cottage, Uncle Nibblecheek tricked her into eating a magic pastry that makes her obedient; Briochebane has the Charmed condition. Until this condition ends, the wyrmling regards the hag as her ally and obeys Uncle Nibblecheek. A character who takes the Search action to observe the wyrmling and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check recognizes she has been Charmed.

The party can end the Charmed condition on the wyrmling in the following ways:

Cinnamon Bribe. Taking the Utilize action to present Briochebane with a cinnamon roll from Fill's bakery immediately ends the Charmed condition on the wyrmling. After devouring the roll as an action, Briochebane thanks the characters, whom she now regards as friends. She then fights Uncle Nibblecheek with vengeful glee.

Damaging the Dragon. Whenever Briochebane takes damage, she makes a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the condition on her ends.

Nibblecheek's Demise. Slaying the hag ends the Charmed condition on the wyrmling.

Kitchen Equipment. The baking utensils, cookware, and oven are all made of polished metal, not candy. A creature that enters the oven for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 11 (2d10) Fire damage. If this damage reduces Uncle Nibblecheek to 0 Hit Points, he melts into a puddle of candy, lamenting "I'm melting!" as he gradually dissolves.

Parleying with the Hag. A character who finds the hag's dentures in the tower (area C12) can use them to ransom the dragon wyrmling. If a character takes the Influence action to present the dentures and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Uncle Nibblecheek grudgingly surrenders the wyrmling to the characters and tells them how to break his magical hold over the wyrmling.

At the DM's discretion, the characters might be able to offer something else in the dentures' place, such as a secret family recipe, one of Fill's delectable cinnamon rolls, or Uncle Nibblecheek's life (if the hag is Bloodied).

As part of the bargain, Uncle Nibblecheek returns any candy creatures in the party to their original forms. If the characters rescued Asger from the dungeon (area C15), Uncle Nibblecheek extends this courtesy to him as well, severing Edith's pact with the hag. The hag then tells the party to scram.

Treasure. One hundred fake rubies worth 1 GP each decorate the oven's exterior. It takes one character 10 minutes to pry all these "gems" from the oven's surface.

C11: Pantry

> Shelves of baking ingredients line the walls of this well-stocked pantry.

The supplies in this pantry include a pristine set of Cook's Utensils, a chef's hat, and ten bags of flour. A patch of green slime (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) is packed within a jar labeled "Granny's Sourdough Starter."

Treasure. A thorough search of the pantry takes 1 minute and yields a pouch containing *Dust of Disappearance.*

C12: Tower

> Curved bookshelves made of rock candy line the interior wall of this tower. Other furnishings include a comfortable chair, an end table, and an ornate claw-footed desk, all carved from dark chocolate. A pair of dentures is clamped around a half-eaten candied apple on the end table. A crooked broom leans against the desk, and an open storybook rests atop it.

The shelves contain books on cooking and baking, all written in Elvish and made of candy. Licking the spine of a book imparts a taste of the knowledge within, while consuming the tome altogether results in a sugar rush followed by mild cramps and gas.

Hag's Dentures. Uncle Nibblecheek's dentures popped out while he was eating the candied apple on the end table. The hag was summoned elsewhere before he could free his teeth from the sticky treat. Removing the dentures from the apple requires a Utilize action and a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Storybook. The storybook on the desk describes Edith's pact with Uncle Nibblecheek (see "Adventure Background"). It presents Edith's life as a fairy tale, highlighting important events with illustrations geared toward children. Characters who peruse the book learn that Edith visited the cottage when she was a girl, betrayed her brother, and struck a partnership with the hag.

The last few pages of the book are blank because Edith's story isn't over. At the end of the adventure, the book magically completes its final pages to reflect the fates of the confectioner and her long-lost brother.

Treasure. The broom leaning against the desk is a *Baba Yaga's Dancing Broom*. Stashed in the desk drawer is a rolled-up *Spell Scroll* of *Greater Restoration*.

C13: Outhouse

> An unsettlingly fragrant outhouse abuts the woods behind the cottage.

The outhouse is built from chocolate planks. Inside the outhouse is a battered Spellbook and a chocolate seat above a shallow pit.

Treasure. The Spellbook has several pages torn out of it. Written on the remaining pages are the following spells: *Alarm*, *Disguise Self*, *Knock*, *Spider Climb*, and *Stinking Cloud*.

C14: Gummy Mummy's Tomb

> This tomb contains a sarcophagus made of hard candy. Two statues formed of crystalline sugar and coconut stand on either side of the sarcophagus amid a trove of gold coins and other precious objects. An inscription on the wall above the sarcophagus reads, "May death curse all who interrupt my rest."

This tomb honors a selfish prince cursed by Uncle Nibblecheek. Now a gummy **Mummy**, the prince lies within the sarcophagus, guarded by two coconut **Ice Mephits**. A character can lift or push aside the sarcophagus lid with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

If the characters disturb the sarcophagus or the treasure, the gummy prince emerges from his sarcophagus and engages the characters in combat. The mephits join the fray.

Candy Curse. A character who steals any of the prince's treasure must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be altered into a candy creature (see "Candy Creatures"). In this form, the character has a translucent gummy body.

Fake Treasure. At first glance, the treasure appears to comprise hundreds of gold coins, jewelry, and other expensive gifts, but all are confection counterfeits—chocolate discs wrapped in foil, geometric sugar crystals, and deceptively crafted cakes with painted fondant. A character who takes the Study action to examine the treasure discerns it is fake.

Gummy Pillow. Inside the sarcophagus is a life-size gummy pillow, which the characters can use to appease Bubba Wugga (see area C9).

C15: Striped Dungeon

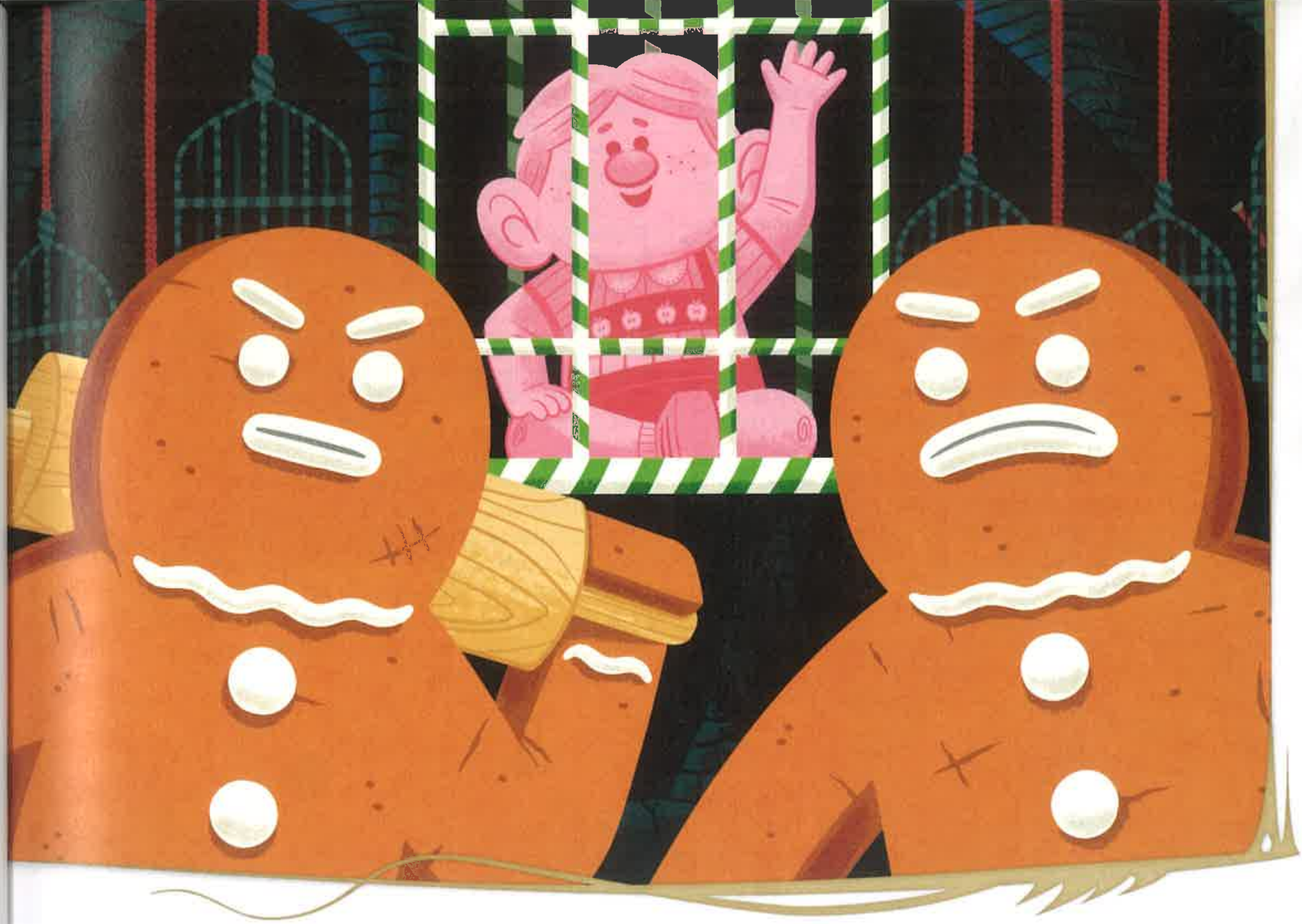
> Candy cages hang from the ceiling of this sugar-glazed dungeon with striped walls. A boy made of pink bubble gum occupies one of the cages, humming an upbeat tune to himself. In another cage, a remarkably large human skeleton loosely grips a hefty axe. Between the cages stand four gingerbread people—each six feet tall and armed with a rolling pin.

A candy ladder in the southeast corner of the room leads to a visible trapdoor in the 10-foot-high ceiling. The trapdoor pushes open easily, revealing the sitting room (area C4) above.

The four gingerbread people (Chaotic Evil **Toughs** armed with rolling pins that function as Maces) attack intruders on sight. The gingerbread people know Common and Elvish.

Gingerbread. Defeated gingerbread people crumble into chunks of inanimate gingerbread, which the characters can use to appease Bubba Wugga (see area C9).

Candy Cages. Eight cages hang from the ceiling, suspended by licorice ropes and dangling 2 feet above the floor. Candy canes as hard as iron form



the cages' red-and-white-striped bars. Each cage is big enough to confine one Medium creature and features a hinged door fitted with a complex lock of good quality (1 minute to pick, DC 15). A check to pick the lock is made with Disadvantage if the character is inside the cage. If the check fails, the character can try again.

The cage doors are comparable to stone doors for the purpose of breaking or forcing them open.

Prisoners. Two cages are occupied, though one of the prisoners is skeletal and clearly dead.

Asger Applegarth is an exuberant halfling (Small **Commoner**) who is candied (see "Candy Creatures") and sits in one of the cages, appearing like soft pink bubble gum. Asger was candied by the hag decades ago and hasn't aged a day since. Asger is Friendly toward the characters. When he notices them, he politely asks them to set him free.

If the characters are kind to Asger, he imparts the following information:

Asger's Story. Asger and his sister, Edith, happened on this cottage long ago. He thinks Uncle Nibblecheek adopted him but misses his sister. (Asger doesn't know about Edith's pact with the hag.)

Cottage Owner. The cottage belongs to a mean old man who eats nothing but candy and the people he turns into candy. The hag lost his teeth a long time ago and can't eat anything without his dentures, which he misplaces frequently.

Kitchen Helper. Until recently, Uncle Nibblecheek forced Asger to work as his kitchen helper, but after a string of baking bungles, the hag locked him up here. Asger fears he's being replaced and soon will be eaten.

Skeleton. Asger doesn't know the identity of the skeletal prisoner in the other cage, whom he has nicknamed "Mr. Jellybean."

After imparting this information, Asger offers to accompany the characters on their quest. Asger knows the cottage well and can point the characters to any of its rooms, though he sometimes forgets about the creatures in them. During combat, Asger hides and cheers for the characters from a safe distance.

If the characters decline Asger's offer, he heads to Bubba Wugga's playroom (area C3), where he remains for the rest of the adventure.

Treasure. Mr. Jellybean holds a *+1 Greataxe*.

Conclusion

How the adventure concludes depends on the characters' actions.

Uncle Nibblecheek's Revenge

If Uncle Nibblecheek survives the adventure and the characters dealt significant damage to his cottage or minions, the hag retaliates by hiring a gang of eight **Goblin Warriors** to kill the characters. These goblins stalk the characters for several days before carrying out their mission. The goblins are cowards, however, and cease fighting if the battle turns against them.

If he learns of the goblins' failure, Uncle Nibblecheek closes up his cottage and travels deep into the forest, where he meets with the other two members of his hag coven. Together, they plot the characters' downfall.

Asger and Edith

If the characters rescue Asger, they might decide to reunite him with Edith or try find him a new home. Possible endings for Asger include the following:

Finding Asger a New Home. If the characters inform Fill about Asger, the dwarf baker offers to adopt him. Along with Briochebane, the three make for an unlikely family, but they live happily ever after, nonetheless.

Reuniting Asger with Edith. If the characters return Asger to Edith, the elderly confectioner crumples at the sight of her brother, who hasn't aged a day since they wandered into the woods together. Teary-eyed and filled with remorse, she renounces her evil ways and vows to make up for lost time. Edith makes good on her promise.

Other Endings. If the characters didn't encounter Asger in the cottage, he either frees himself by squeezing between the bars of his cage or returns to working as Uncle Nibblecheek's kitchen helper, depending on whether the hag is alive or dead.

If the characters confront Edith about her crimes without Asger present, she confesses. Burdened with years of guilt, the confectioner turns herself in to the local authorities and never reopens her shop.

Otherwise, Edith pays the characters, reports Briochebane and Fill to the authorities, packs up her business, and moves to the next town.

Fill's Reward

Assuming the characters free Briochebane from the hag, the dragon accompanies the characters back to Fill's bakery without being spotted. The wyrmling apologizes profusely for setting Edith's confectionery on fire and is wracked with guilt for putting Edith in danger. If Briochebane comes into contact with Edith, the wyrmling apologizes to her too.

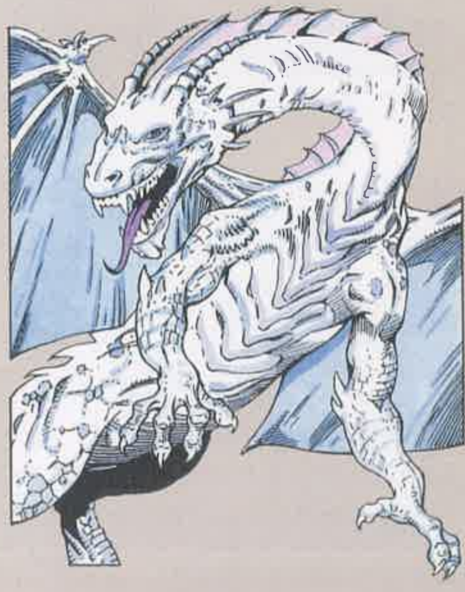
Fill admonishes the dragon on her return, but their reunion is joyous nevertheless. Fill rewards the characters with a box of warm pastries and 100 GP in a pouch.

If informed about Edith's unsavory deeds, Fill rescinds his earlier offer to pay for the damage to her confectionery.

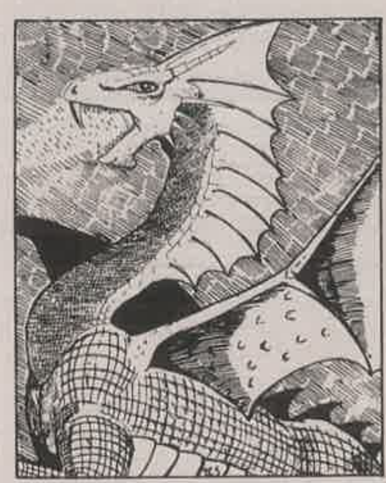
If the characters report Fill or his ward for the fire at the confectionery, Fill tries to persuade Briochebane to flee Hubbleton, but Briochebane insists on staying to make amends. The characters forfeit their reward; the same is true if the characters return to Fill empty-handed.

HISTORY OF
SILVER DRAGONS

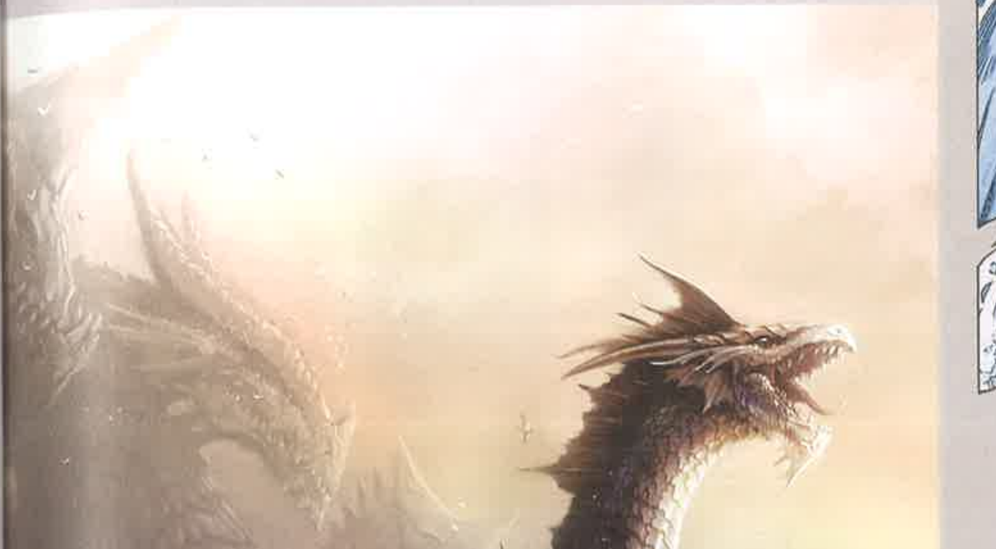
For all the many changes in the look of dragons over the years, the silver dragon's distinctive crest is visible in every incarnation.



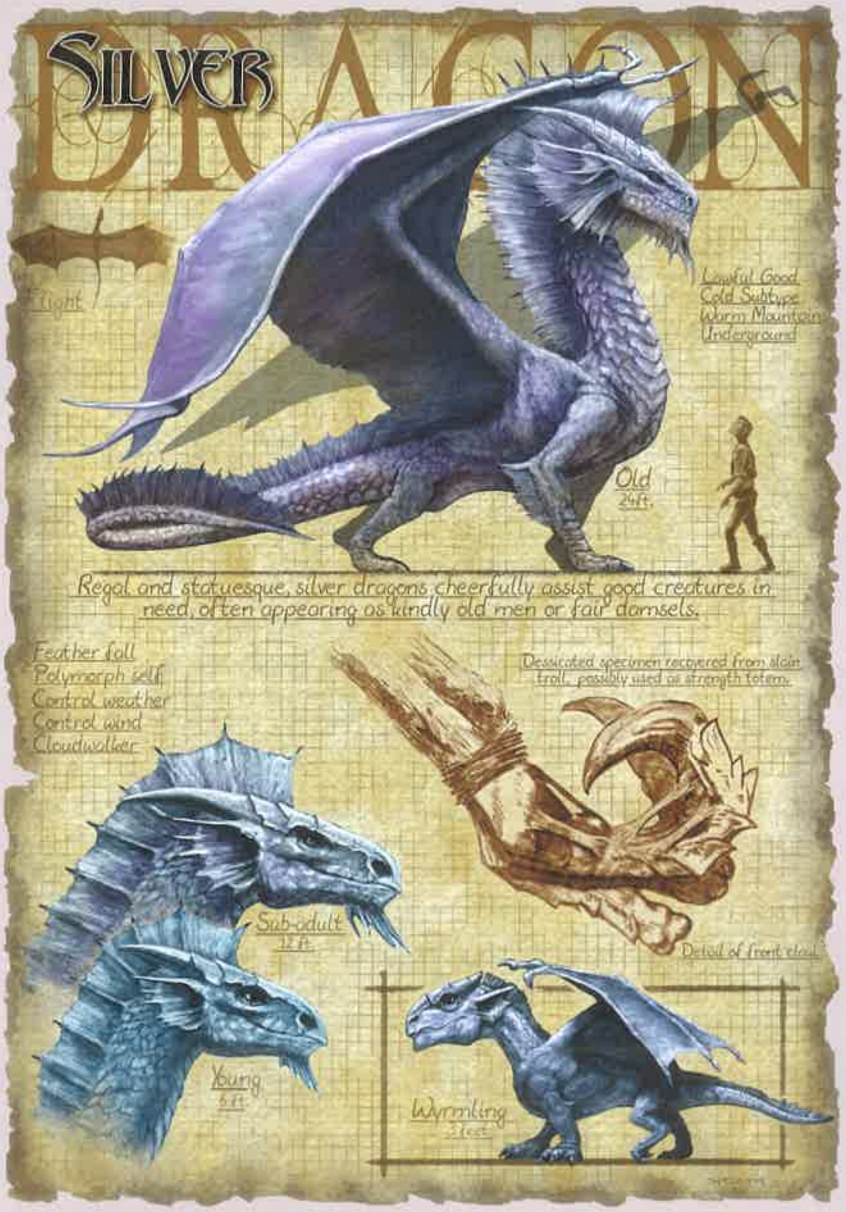
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



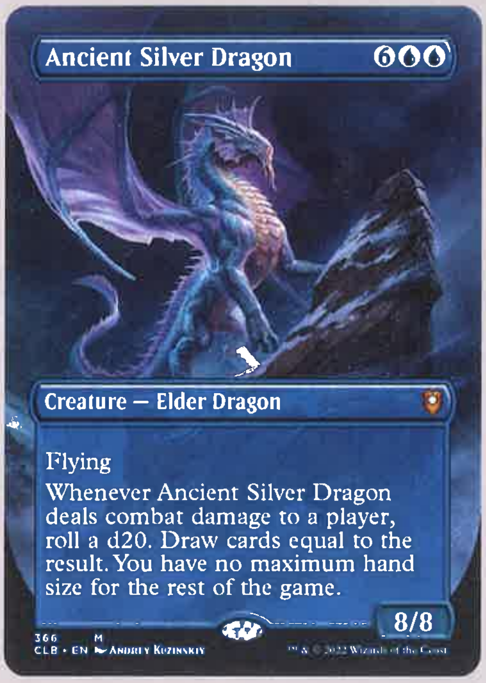
Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland



Eberron Campaign Guide (2009)
Artist: Chippy


SILVER DRAGON
Flight
Lawful Good
Cold Subtype
Warm Mountain
Underground
Old
24 ft.
Regal and statuesque, silver dragons cheerfully assist good creatures in need, often appearing as kindly old men or fair damsels.
Feather fall
Polymorph self
Control weather
Control wind
Cloudwalker
Dessicated specimen recovered from slain troll, possibly used as strength totem.
Sub-adult
12 ft.
Detail of front claw
Young
6 ft.
Wyrmling
3 feet

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



Ancient Silver Dragon

Creature — Elder Dragon

Flying

Whenever Ancient Silver Dragon deals combat damage to a player, roll a d20. Draw cards equal to the result. You have no maximum hand size for the rest of the game.

8/8
366 M
CLB • EN Andrey Kuzinskiy
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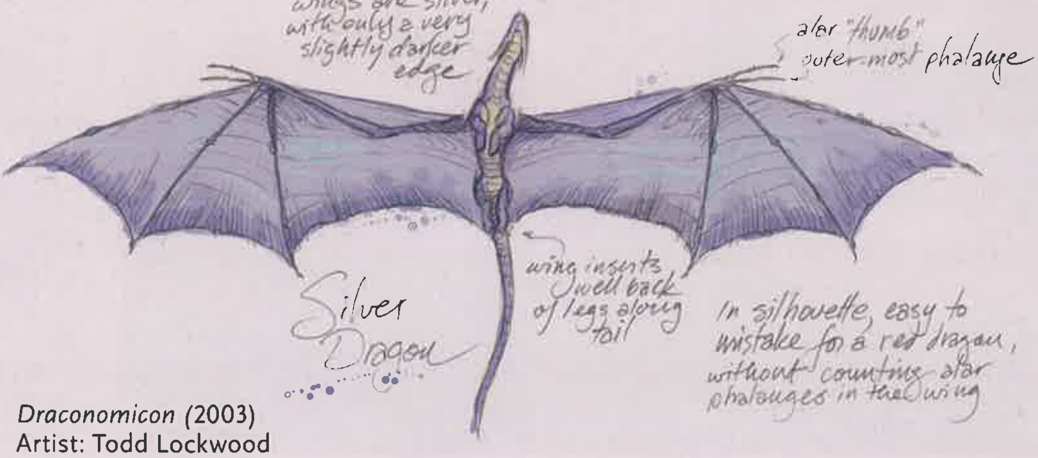
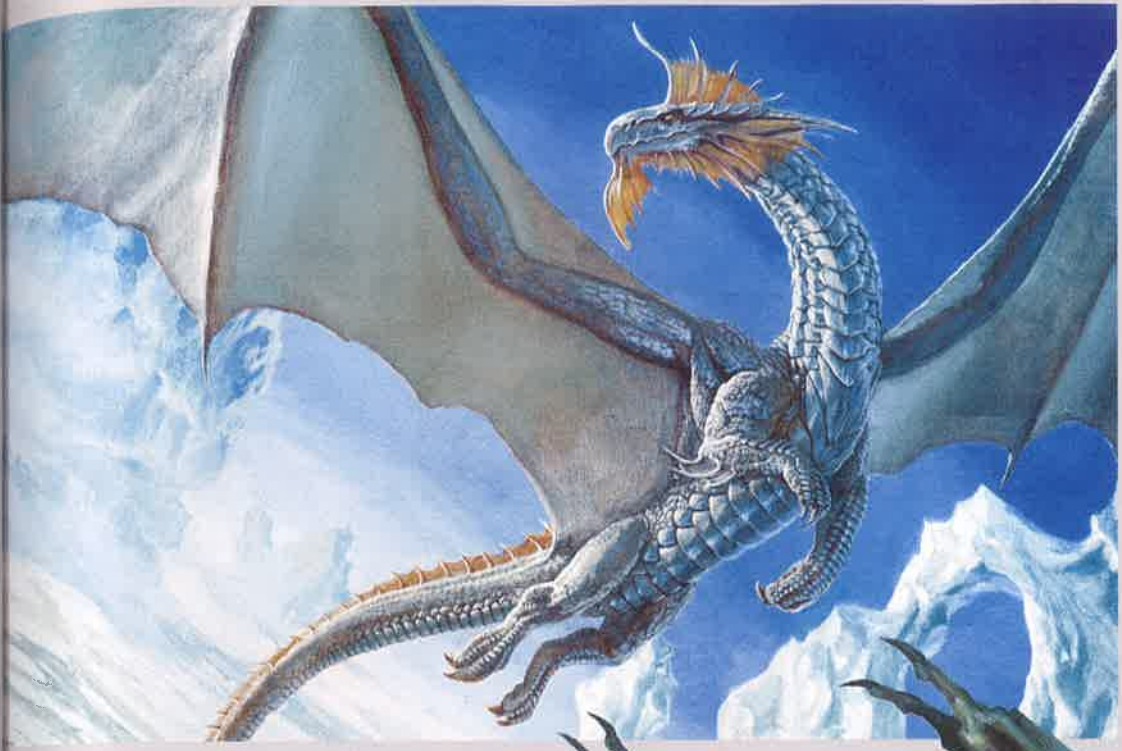
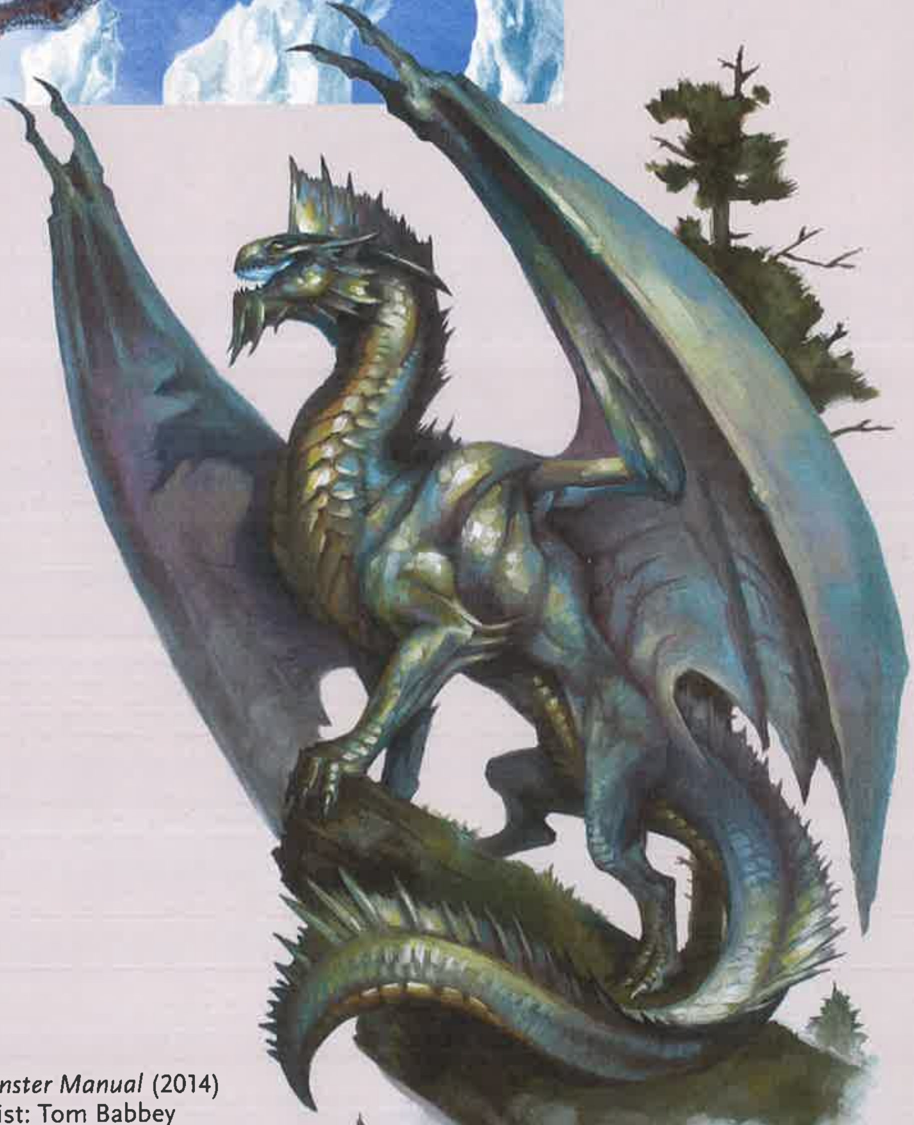
Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate (2022)
Artist: Andrey Kuzinskiy


wings are silver, with only a very slightly darker edge
alar "thumb"
outer-most phalange
wing inserts well back of legs along tail
Silver Dragon
In silhouette, easy to mistake for a red dragon, without counting alar phalanges in the wing

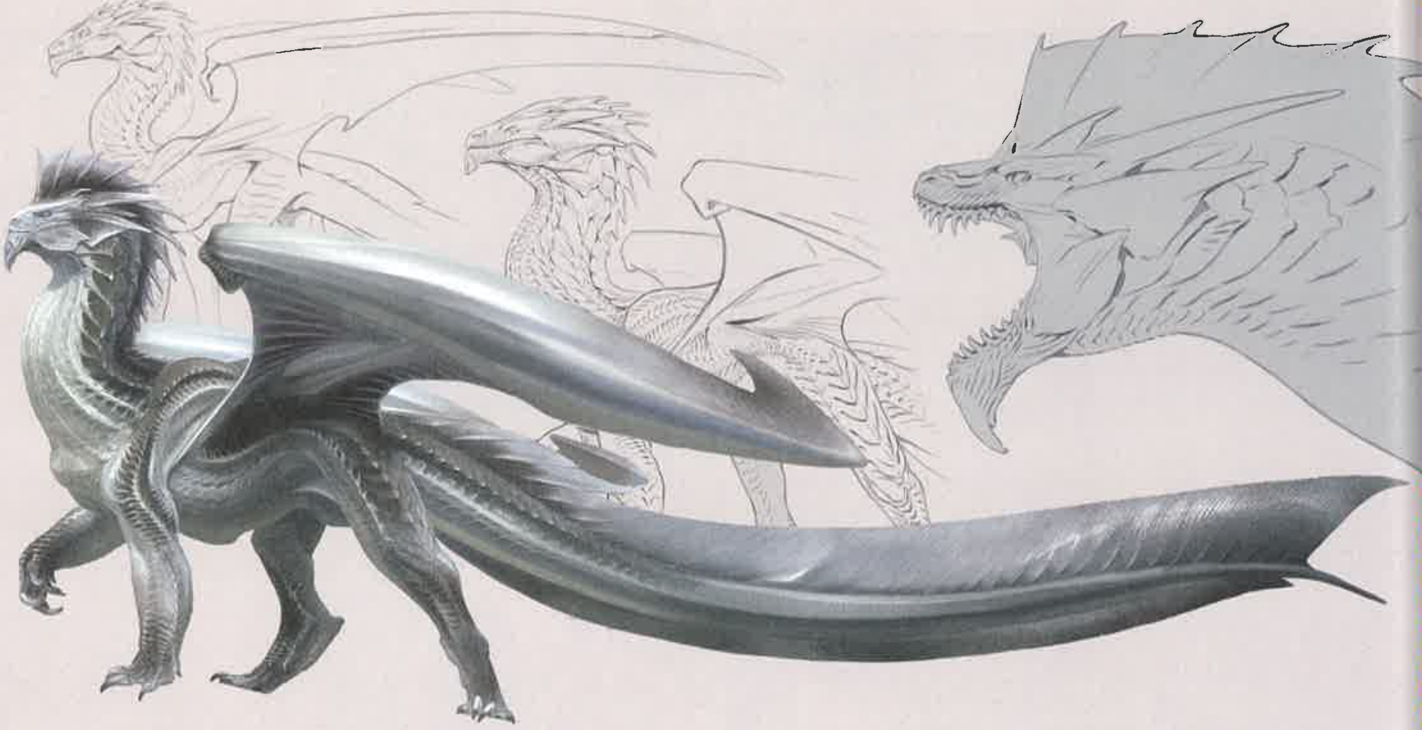
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



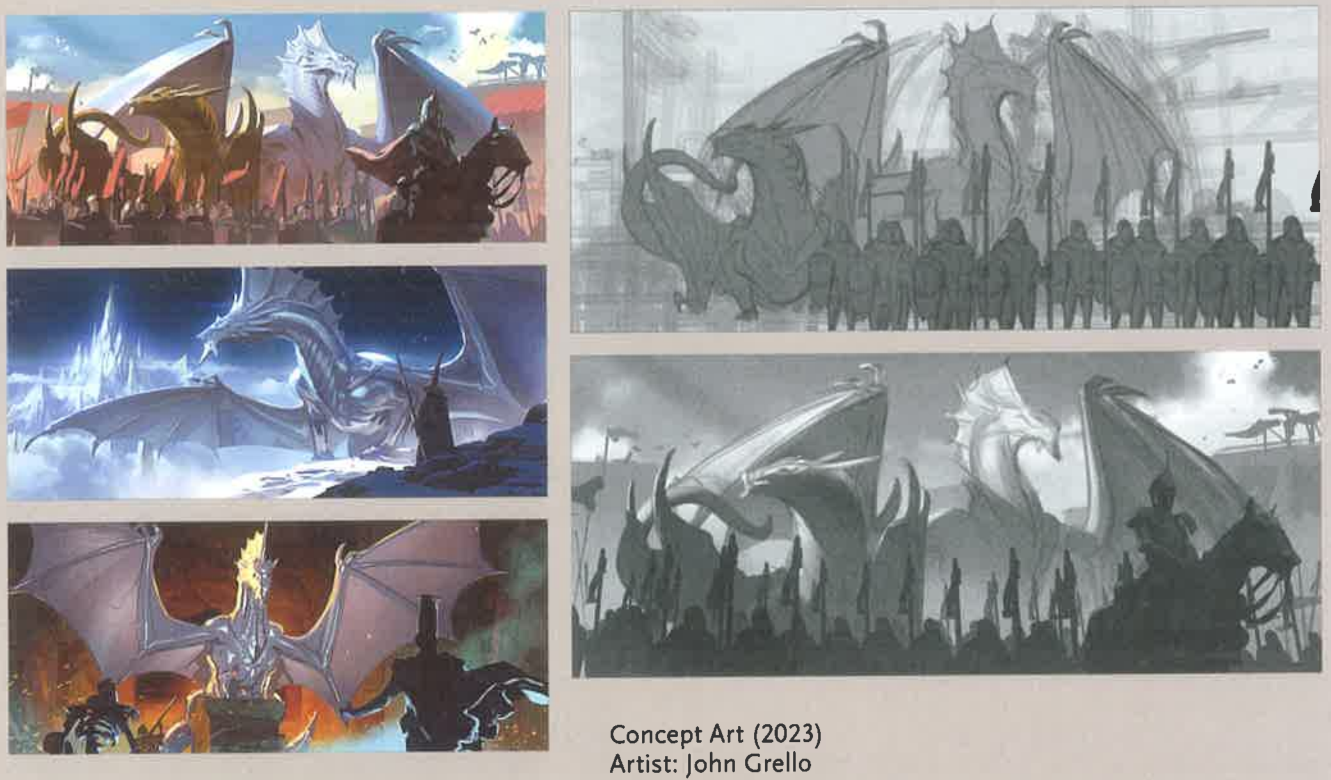
Monster Manual 2 (2009)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



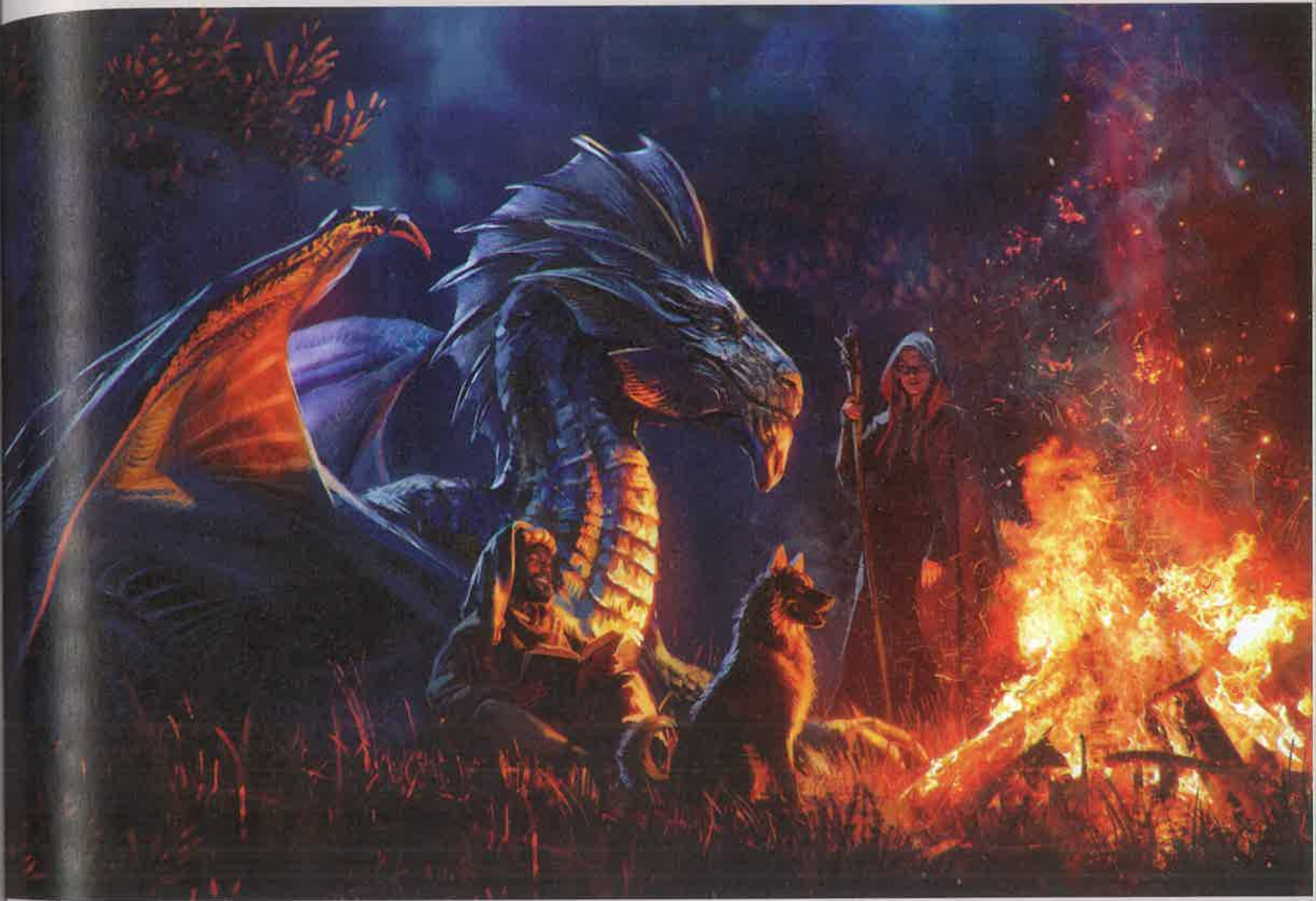
Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Tom Babbey



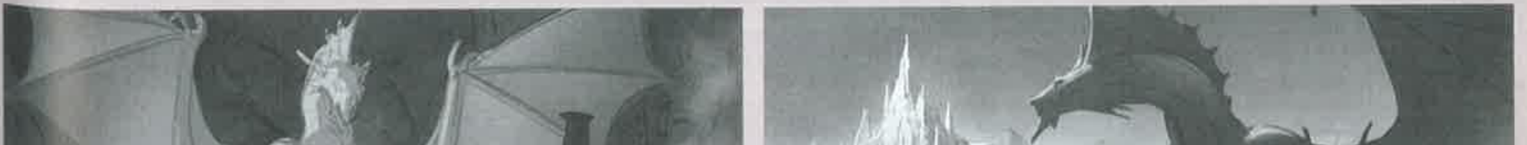
Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: John Grello



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Anna Podedworna



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: John Grello

CHAPTER 3

The Will of Orcus

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 4
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE THERE ARE MOUNTAINS AND SETTLEMENTS.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Disturbing Activity. An aasimar innkeeper named Oriann Solaris asks the characters to investigate evil cultists who have taken up residence in a nearby temple to Orcus. The cultists have been stealing goods, which Oriann asks the characters to find and return.

Temple Invasion. To foil the cultists, the characters must foray into the temple. In so doing, they learn that a silver dragon has been trying to sow division in the cult and keep it from doing too much evil in the world—until heroes arrive who can help the dragon slay the cult's leader.

Meeting the Dragon. If the characters don't prove themselves in battle against the cult, the silver dragon tests them with commands. The characters must either fulfill three commands or realize the dragon's deception. The dragon tells his story if the characters win his trust.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section.

Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table below. The characters will interact with these individuals throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Make a copy of the Temple Map handout. (You will share this with the other players shortly after the adventure starts.)

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Black Pudding
Commoner
Crawling Claws, Swarm of
Cultist Fanatic
Flameskull
Ghast Gravecaller
Ghost
Ghoul
Mummy
Silver Dragon Wyrmling
Skeleton
Skeleton, Flaming
Specter
Wraith
Zombie
Zombie, Ogre

KEY NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Akira Norixius	Fanatically devout dragonborn cultist	**Cultist Fanatic** (Medium, Chaotic Evil)	T1
Eleith Brittlebones	Deluded dwarf cultist	**Cultist Fanatic** (Medium, Chaotic Evil)	T6
Melindra Vox	Cult librarian	**Ghost** (Chaotic Evil)	T6
Oriann Solaris	Aasimar innkeeper and quest giver	**Commoner** (Medium, Lawful Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"
Nezzarum	Dragon tricking Orcus cultists	**Silver Dragon Wyrmling**	T13
Xia	Cult leader	**Ghast Gravecaller**	T12
Yondis Morgrin	Questioning human cultist	**Cultist Fanatic** (Medium, Chaotic Neutral)	T7

Adventure Background

An evil cult has reclaimed an abandoned temple hidden in the mountains. Although time and neglect have taken their toll on the place, the cultists were pleased to find an undamaged statue of Orcus, the Demon Prince of Undeath, in the temple's heart.

The cult's ghastly leader, Xia, was doubly pleased that she could hear the voice of the demon lord issuing from the statue. Orcus promised to reveal secret knowledge that will make Xia's cult a powerful force.

Unbeknownst to Xia and her fellow cultists, the voice issuing from the statue is not that of Orcus but that of a silver dragon named Nezzarum. Nezzarum was exploring the temple as a possible lair when Xia and her cultists showed up. Using a secret door in the base of the statue, Nezzarum crawled inside the statue. The dragon is using trickery to prevent the cult from doing anything too terrible and to draw possible allies to the temple to help him defeat the cult leader.

Even as he sends the cult leader on relatively harmless missions to steal goods, he whispers to the non-Undead members of the cult to undermine their loyalty to Xia. The gullible cultists are in disarray, and the characters' arrival sets the stage for the final phase of Nezzarum's plan.

Beginning the Adventure

To begin the adventure, read the following aloud:

> The Deathsbane Tavern in the remote mountain village of Greysmere is a local marvel. It was established by a couple who retired from adventuring after their heroic effort to defeat a cult of Orcus that had established a temple in the nearby mountains. The tavern is now run by their heir and decorated with trophies of their adventures.
>
> Your visit to this local attraction takes a somber turn when the aasimar innkeeper, Oriann Solaris, asks you for help. Oriann is a silver-haired, golden-eyed aasimar with a serious countenance.
>
> "Evil has returned to the temple," they tell you. "Shambling corpses rove the area at night and dig up old graves, accompanied by ominous figures wearing crimson robes and goat masks. They're stealing food, tools, and paint for some sinister purpose, and I'm sure it's just a matter of time until they unleash a new reign of terror, as the cult did in my parents' day. I didn't follow in my parents' illustrious footsteps, but you have the power to stop this evil."

Oriann Solaris is a Friendly innkeeper (Medium, Lawful Good **Commoner**) who gives the characters free lodging for the night and urges them to visit the temple at daybreak.

Temple Map

When the characters are ready to travel to the temple, give the players copies of the Temple Map handout and read the following aloud:

> Oriann's parents drew a rough map of the temple, which the innkeeper now entrusts to your care. Oriann attests to the map's accuracy but admits it might be incomplete. They have also added a list of the stolen items to the map.

In exchange for the characters ridding the temple of evil and returning as many of the stolen items as possible, Oriann will take up a collection from the townsfolk to pay the adventurers 200 GP each.

Travel to the Temple

Summarize the trip to the temple with this description:

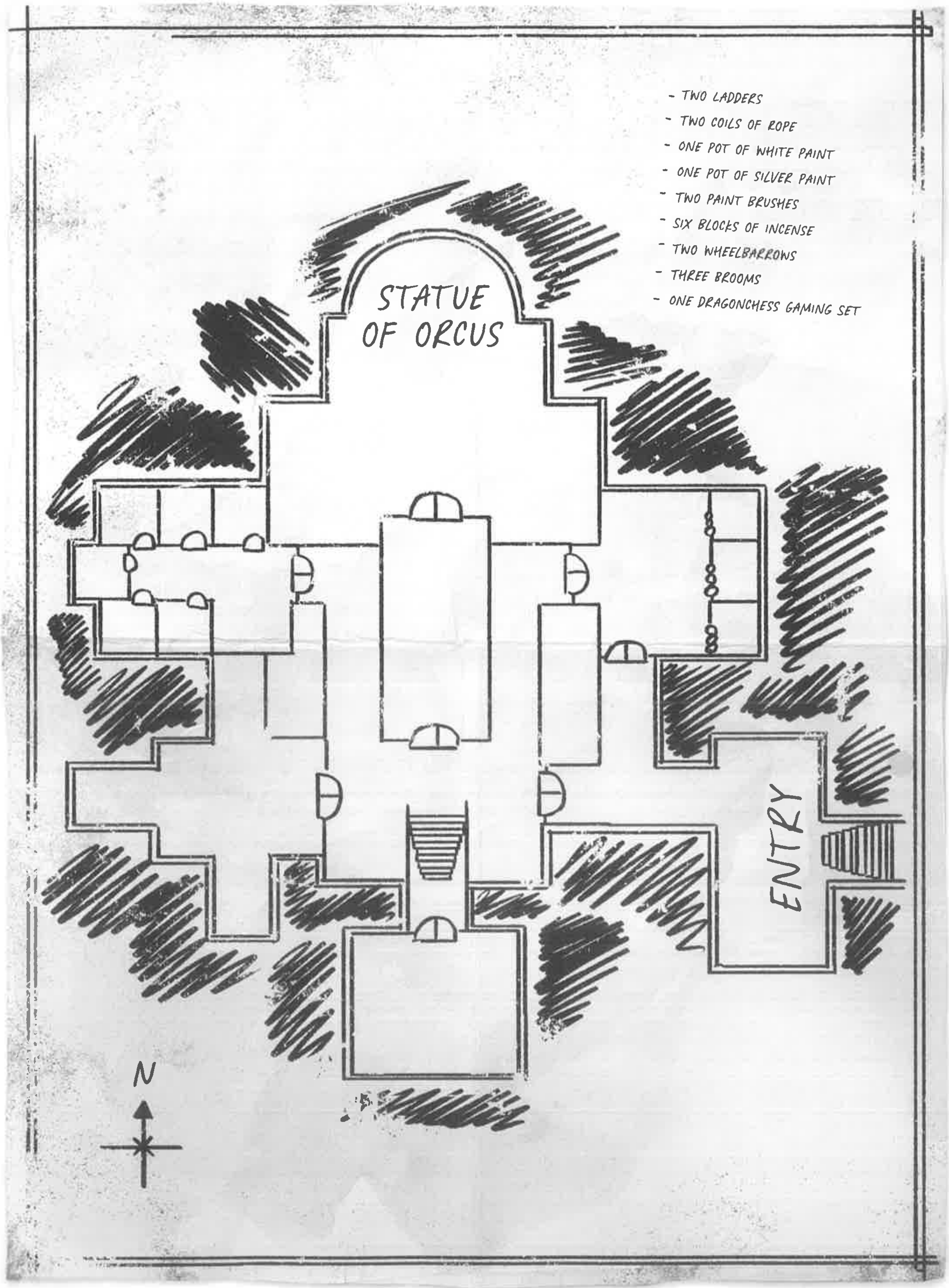
> The journey to the temple is short and uneventful. A crust of snow covers the ground, and the biting wind is the only foe you encounter.
>
> Clouds obscure the peak of the windswept mountain before you. Carved into its base, the old temple's entrance yawns ten feet wide by twenty feet high. A few feet inside, a rough-hewn staircase descends into the cold bedrock. Eerie green light emanates from goat skulls embedded in the walls at regular intervals.

No guards are posted at the entrance. The staircase descends 50 feet to the entry (area T1), where guardians await.

The Temple of Orcus

The temple was carved over a century ago by devout followers of Orcus. Twenty years ago, adventurers stormed the temple, slew the cult leaders, and scared away the remaining cultists.

The place stood abandoned until a few weeks ago, when Nezzarum the silver dragon discovered it and started exploring it as a potential lair. By sheer coincidence, Xia and her followers arrived days later to reclaim the temple in Orcus's name.


- TWO LADDERS
- TWO COILS OF ROPE
- ONE POT OF WHITE PAINT
- ONE POT OF SILVER PAINT
- TWO PAINT BRUSHES
- SIX BLOCKS OF INCENSE
- TWO WHEELBARROWS
- THREE BROOMS
- ONE DRAGONCHESS GAMING SET
STATUE OF ORCUS
ENTRY
N

Handout: Temple Map

Xia's Cult

Xia, the cult's leader, is a ghast—an Undead servant of Orcus. A few ghouls serve as her personal assistants, and zombies under Xia's control perform menial labor for the cult. The rest of the cult consists of three people who range from fanatical to deluded in serving the Demon Prince of Undeath.

Talking to Cultists

Three non-Undead cultists inhabit the temple, serving as intermediaries between Xia and the zombies she has animated. The descriptions of the rooms where the cultists are found include details on whether the characters can talk to them to acquire information about the cult. If willing to talk, cultists share the information below.

Speaking Statue

Xia thinks Orcus speaks to her through the statue in the main temple (area T13). Xia obeys the statue's orders without question, though she finds them perplexing. While the statue gives Xia orders, it sows doubts in the minds of her mortal followers.

Temple Secrets

Xia believes the temple holds many secrets. When not performing chores for the statue of Orcus, her followers busily search for hidden secrets.

Xia's Goals

While the refurbishment is underway, Xia steals corpses from nearby graveyards to fill her larder and bolster the ranks of her laborers. When work on the temple is complete, she plans to sacrifice all the people and animals within ten miles of the temple to consecrate the temple and unlock its latent power.

Orcus's Orders

The cultists are perplexed by the orders issuing from the demon lord's statue, which include the following:

- Topple and destroy all the ghoul statues in the temple, and destroy all symbols and representations of the demon lord. (This work has begun in area T1.)
- Paint silver and white clouds on the walls. (This work is happening in area T12.)
- Leave a dragonchess set in the main temple (area T13). (The set disappeared shortly after being placed before the statue of Orcus.)

By directing the cultists to steal supplies from the nearby town for their renovation work, Nezzarum hopes to attract attention to the cult.

Temple Features

Unless otherwise specified, the temple has the following features.

Ceilings

The temple's passages and rooms are 20 feet high everywhere except area T13, where the ceiling is 30 feet high.

Dim Light

Eerie green light emanates from goat skulls embedded in the temple's walls. These skulls cast Dim Light throughout the temple.

Doors and Secret Doors

Temple doors are unlocked and made of iron with carved bone handles. Secret doors are made of stone and blend into the surrounding walls (DC 15 to notice). Secret doors are unlocked and swing open on hidden iron hinges.

Rubble

Rubble marked on map 3.1 is Difficult Terrain.

Skeletal Remains

The skeletal remains of the original cultists are marked on map 3.1. Searching a cultist's remains requires a Search action and yields a tattered crimson Robe, a rusty Shortsword, an old Shortbow, a Quiver with 1d10 Arrows, and 1d10 GP.

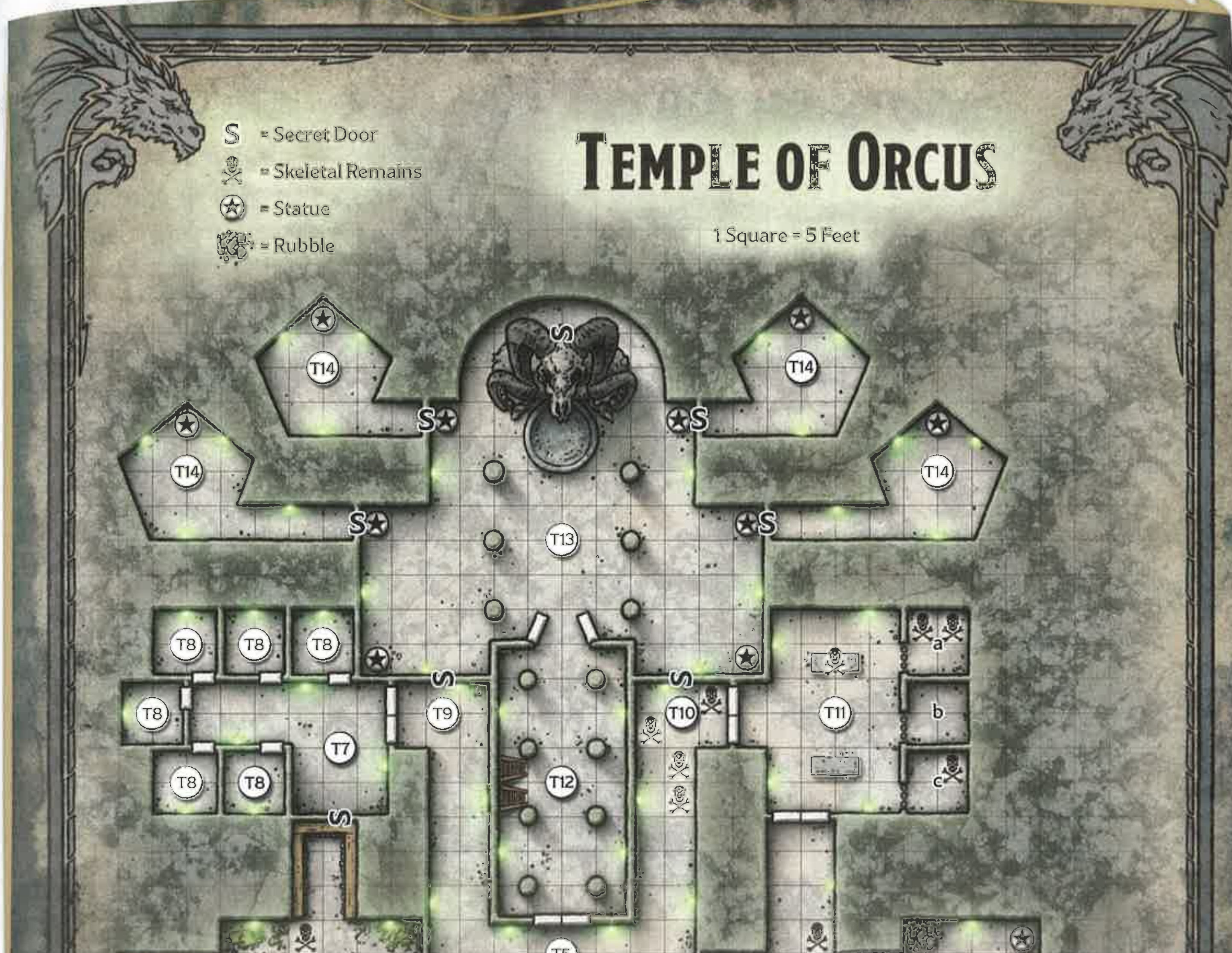
Temple Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 3.1.

T1: Temple Entry

As the characters descend the staircase leading to this room, read or paraphrase the following:

> The stairs end at a wide chamber. Two gaunt creatures with sharp claws and long tongues crouch near the bottom of the stairs, licking their lips unsettlingly as you approach.
>
> In the northeast corner of the room, three disheveled figures wearing crimson robes tug on a pair of ropes fastened around a statue of a ghoul. Groaning in inhuman voices, they try to topple it as a robed dragonborn yells instructions at them.
>
> The floor is covered with broken tiles, and more shards fill two wheelbarrows in the middle of the room. Two brooms lean against the far wall near a passageway that heads west.


TEMPLE OF ORCUS
1 Square = 5 Feet
S = Secret Door
= Skeletal Remains
= Statue
= Rubble
T1
T2
T3
Down
T4
T5
T6
T7
T8
T9
T10
T11
a
b
c
T12
T13
T14
L
Hidden Pit
To the Surface
N
E
S
W

Map 3.1: Temple of Orcus

Two **Ghouls** keep watch on the stairs while Akira Norixius (Medium, Chaotic Evil **Cultist Fanatic**)—a fanatical dragonborn devotee of Orcus—supervises the inept labor of three **Zombies**. Xia ordered the group to topple the statues in this room and sweep up the rubble for removal. Akira and the ghouls are Hostile and fight anyone not wearing the crimson robes of Xia's cult. The zombies attack at Akira's command.

Cultist. Akira Norixius believes unquestioningly in the cause of Orcus' cult; she looks forward to her own death because she expects to be transformed into an Undead when it occurs. She therefore fights to the death and is entirely unwilling to share information with the characters.

Broken Tiles. Until recently, the floor had a painted tile mosaic set into it. The mosaic depicted Orcus slaying a legion of human knights and reanimating their corpses. Xia ordered her servants to destroy the mosaic, sweep up the tiles, and place them in the wheelbarrows. Any character who takes the Study action to inspect the broken tiles and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines the mosaic once depicted Orcus, the Demon Prince of Undeath.

Secret Door. Set into the wall behind the southwest pile of rubble is a secret door (see "Temple Features"). Behind it lies a sloped passageway (area T3).

Stolen Goods to Recover. The brooms, Ropes, and wheelbarrows are all stolen goods (see "Stolen Goods").

T2: T-Shaped Passage

> This branching passage ends in iron double doors to the west and to the north. On the floor near the intersection lie three sets of skeletal remains in dust-shrouded crimson robes.

Skeletal Remains. See "Temple Features" for more on the skeletal remains here.

T3: Sloped Passageway

This dusty, 5-foot-wide tunnel slopes steeply down toward the west; the west end of the tunnel is 10 feet lower than the east end.

Doors. From within the tunnel, the doors to areas T1 and T4 are plainly visible.

T4: Hall of Swiveling Statues

> Lining the west and east walls of this room, six statues depict ghoulish humanoids, their claws outstretched, their mouths agape, and their stony tongues extended. Lying on the floor are the skeletal remains of five humans in dusty crimson robes.
>
> Carved into the south wall is the skull of a giant goat, which measures ten feet across.

The giant goat skull carved on the wall is a symbol of Orcus.

Skeletal Remains. This room holds five piles of skeletal remains (see "Temple Features"). The first time someone opens one of the secret doors to the vaults (area T14) in this room, one set of remains animates, ignites in unholy fire, and becomes a **Flaming Skeleton**, while the other four piles animate and each form a **Skeleton**. The skeletons are Hostile toward all creatures except Undead.

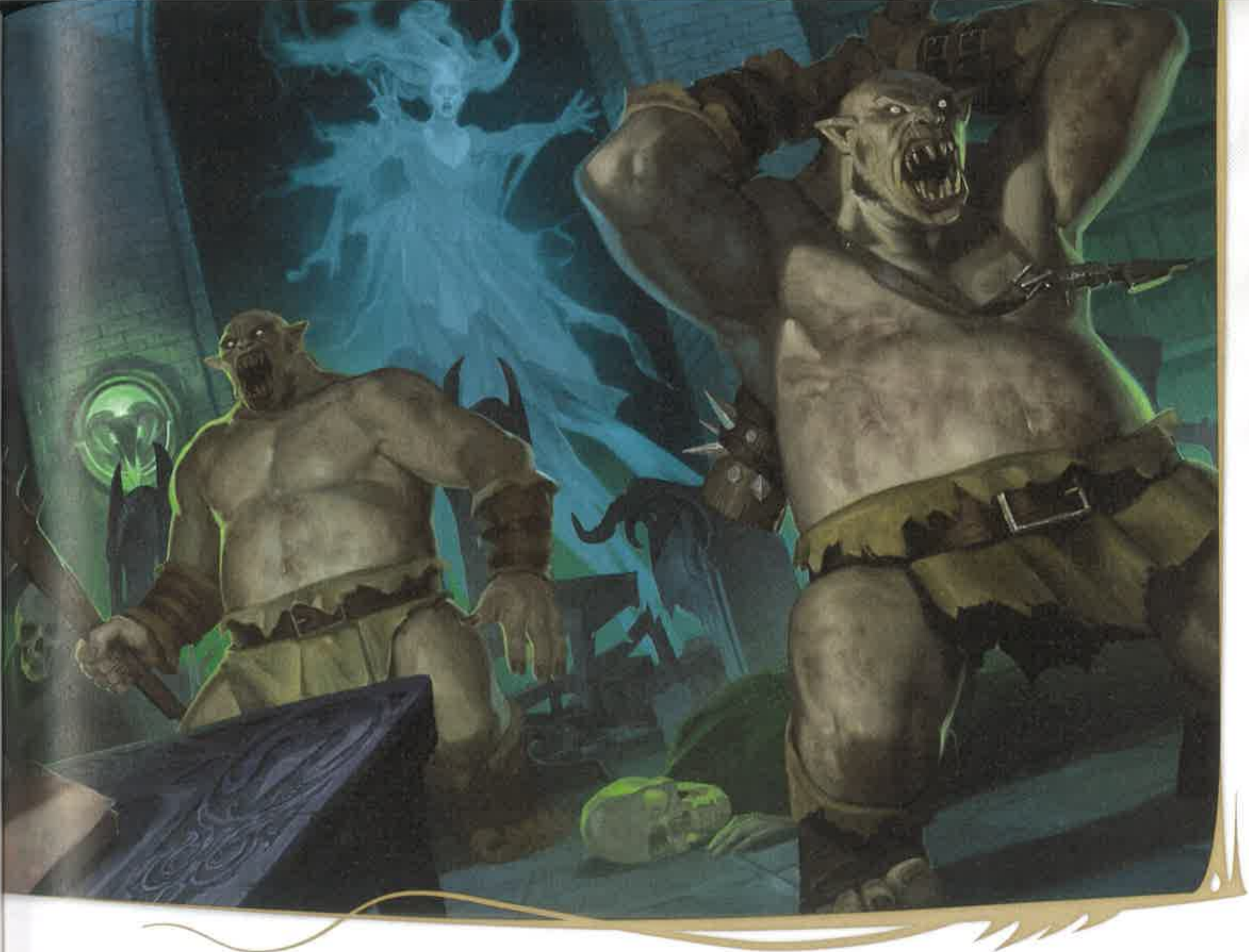
Secret Doors and Statues. This room contains three secret doors (see "Temple Features"), each one located behind a ghoul statue. The area between a statue and a secret door is wide enough for only a Tiny creature to fit comfortably. For a Small or Medium creature, those areas are Difficult Terrain.

Whenever a non-Undead creature tries to pass through a secret door, the statue in front of that door swivels on its base and swipes a claw at the creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) Slashing damage. As a Utilize action, a character can disable a swiveling statue by jamming a Dagger, an Iron Spike, or a similar object into the slight gap between the statue's base and the floor.

T5: Sinister Stairs

> Four stone pillars buttress the vaulted ceiling of this otherwise empty hall. Two wide tunnels lead north. Iron double doors stand closed on the north, west, and east walls. Inscribed in the northern double door is the vile visage of Orcus, the horned demon lord. He fixes his evil gaze on a staircase of polished black marble at the south end of the room, which descends ten feet to another double door. Stone railings flank the staircase.

Hidden Lever. A character who takes the Search action to examine the southwest pillar automatically finds a loose panel, behind which is an iron



lever (marked with an *L* on map 3.1). As a Utilize action, a creature can pull this lever to reset the trap described below.

Trap. The stairs collapse to form a slide whenever a creature that isn't an Undead steps on them. At the same time, the stone lid concealing a hidden pit at the bottom of the stairs snaps open.

The first time a non-Undead creature steps on the stairs, the creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall down the slide into the pit, which is 20 feet deep and lined with rusty spikes. The creature takes 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage from the fall plus 9 (2d8) Piercing damage from the spikes.

Pulling the hidden lever closes the pit's lid and resets the stairs. The lid opens only when the trap is triggered and otherwise is safe to move on. As a Utilize action, a character can try to force the lid open (from inside or outside the pit), doing so with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

T6: Occult Library

Characters who listen at either entrance to this room notice heavy footfalls within and the sound of furniture being smashed.

> A putrid stench greets you here—its source is two zombified ogres that are smashing all the furniture in this room, apparently obeying the commands of a dwarf wearing a red robe. Desks and chairs made of black wood and adorned with skulls lie splintered amid the skeletal remains of four long-dead humans in dusty crimson robes. Tall stone bookshelves line deep alcoves to the north, south, and west. Floating in the alcove opposite you, a spectral human woman beseeches the ogres to halt their destructive rampage.

Following the statue of Orcus's instructions, Xia commanded the cultist—a dwarf named Eleith Brittlebones (Medium, Chaotic Evil **Cultist Fanatic**)—to destroy everything in this library. Eleith commands two **Ogre Zombies** to do the heavy labor. The cultist and zombies are Hostile and fight anyone not wearing the crimson robes of Xia's cult.

Cultist. Eleith Brittlebones has been duped into following the cult of Orcus. Xia convinced the dwarf that the world is nearing its end, the gods are dead, and the demonic forces of death are close to their ultimate triumph, persuading him to join the "winning side" in this cosmic conflict. As soon as Eleith notices a character use obvious divine magic—healing an ally or turning undead, for example—the dwarf surrenders. In this case, Eleith becomes willing to share information about the cult in exchange for information about living deities and the state of the cosmos. See "Xia's Cult" above for information Eleith can share.

Alcoves. Each alcove contains 4d10 + 20 barely legible books and scrolls, all of them brittle and flammable. A character who takes the Study action and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check discerns that these materials describe various rites practiced by Orcus worshipers.

Ghostly Librarian. The spectral figure in the alcove is the **Ghost** of Melindra Vox, the librarian of the earlier Orcus cult. She is Chaotic Evil and initially Indifferent toward visitors. She is furious that the zombies are ruining her collection of books and scrolls but can't stop them herself, as she has vowed never to harm cult allies. When she notices the characters, Melindra assumes they are intruders who aren't subject to such vows, and she beseeches them to destroy the **Ogre Zombies**. If the characters oblige, Melindra becomes Friendly toward them. If they refuse to help, she remains Indifferent.

If the characters converse with Melindra while she is Friendly, she reveals that adventurers slew her many years ago during their raid on the temple, after she refused to abandon her library. If the characters ask about treasure or secret knowledge, Melindra advises them to search for secret doors behind every statue, claiming there are "secret vaults throughout."

Melindra doesn't know how to find peace in the afterlife. A character who takes the Study action and makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check discerns the way to lay her spirit to rest: either by removing all the books and scrolls from the library or by destroying them. Melindra becomes Hostile toward and fights anyone who tries to remove or destroy her collection.

Secret Door. A bookshelf in the north alcove conceals a secret door (see "Temple Features"), behind which lies the dining hall (area T7).

Skeletal Remains. See "Temple Features" for more on the skeletal remains here.

T7: Dining Hall

> This chamber contains a rectangular table with clawed feet surrounded by twelve high-backed chairs. Hanging off the backs of the chairs are hideous masks made from goat skulls. A sallow-faced young human in a crimson robe sits at one end of the table, eating some meat that looks undercooked and smells unappetizing. A broom leans against the table next to him.

Xia and her cultists wear the goat-skull masks when they venture out in public. The masks are terrifying but worthless.

Cultist. The young man sitting at the table (facing the secret door in the south wall) is Yondis Morgrin (Medium, Chaotic Neutral **Cultist Fanatic**), a member of Xia's cult who is questioning his participation in it. He was initially attracted to the promise of being transformed into an Undead creature even more powerful than Xia, and he likes to pretend he is Undead already. He wears pasty makeup, shambles like a zombie, and eats undercooked and spoiling meat, but the disguise fools no one.

Yondis is Indifferent toward the characters, whether or not they wear the crimson robes of Xia's cult. If the characters combat him, Yondis fights until he is Bloodied, at which point he surrenders.

The whisperings of Nezzarum through the Orcus statue have thrown Yondis into confusion. He can't understand why Orcus would be ordering Xia to destroy the iconography of Orcus around the temple, and when Yondis is alone in the presence of the statue, it whispers to him of the beauty of life and the pleasures of fresh air, well-cooked meals, and heroic deeds. His doubts make him susceptible to being drawn away from the cult. A character who takes the Influence action can make a DC 10 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check to try to coax information from him (see "Xia's Cult" above for information Yondis can share about the cult).

Secret Door. A secret door in the south wall (see "Temple Features") pulls open to reveal the library beyond (area T6).

Stolen Goods to Recover. Yondis's broom is a stolen item (see "Stolen Goods").

T8: Living Quarters

Six bedchambers open off the dining hall (area T7). Each contains two plain wooden cots with straw-stuffed mattresses and woolen blankets. Next to each bed are wall hooks for hanging apparel. Only three of the chambers show any sign of recent use.

T9: West Tunnel

This *L*-shaped hall leads from area T5 to a double door into the dining hall (area T7).

Secret Door. A secret door in the north wall stands ajar and requires no ability check to spot. Yondis (see area T7) found it recently and jammed an old finger bone into the doorway to prevent the door from closing all the way and make it easy for him to find.

T10: East Tunnel

> This tunnel is littered with the dusty bones of four dead humans wearing tattered crimson robes. One of the skeletons slumps in a corner next to a double door. It wears an amulet shaped like a goat's rotting head and clutches a ring of keys.

This *L*-shaped hall leads from area T5 to a double door into the ritual chamber (area T11).

Secret Door. Set into the north wall, a secret door (see "Temple Features") leads to the main temple (area T13).

Skeletal Remains. See "Temple Features" for more on the skeletal remains here.

Treasure. The inanimate skeleton next to the double door is all that remains of the temple's high priest. It clutches a ring holding three iron keys, which unlock the cell doors in area T11, and wears an amulet shaped like a goat's rotting head (the symbol of Orcus) on a chain around its neck. The silver amulet is worth 25 GP and has a hidden compartment containing a folded-up *Spell Scroll* of *Animate Dead*. A character who takes the Search action to examine the amulet finds the hidden compartment with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

T11. Ritual Chamber

> Rusty shackles dangle from this chamber's walls. In the middle of the room sit two stone slabs. Draped over the northern slab is a human skeleton wearing a dusty crimson robe and an eye patch. It clutches a whip in one bony hand.
>
> Along the east wall are three rusty gates with mold-covered cells beyond them.

Cultists used to perform ghastly rites here. Human prisoners were confined to the cells (see below) until they were sacrificed. After death, they would be brought back to this room, where the high priest would animate them as zombies.

Cells. All three cell doors are locked; a skeleton in the east tunnel (area T10) holds the keys. The DC to pick one of these locks is 15. The cells' contents are as follows:

Cell A holds the skeletal remains of two humans.
Cell B appears empty but contains a hidden compartment behind a loose stone in the east wall. A character who takes the Search action and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers the loose stone and the treasure hidden behind it (see "Treasure" below).
Cell C contains the bones of a treacherous tiefling cultist who tried and failed to overthrow the temple's high priest. Disturbing this skeleton causes the traitor's spirit to manifest as a **Wraith** and fight the characters.

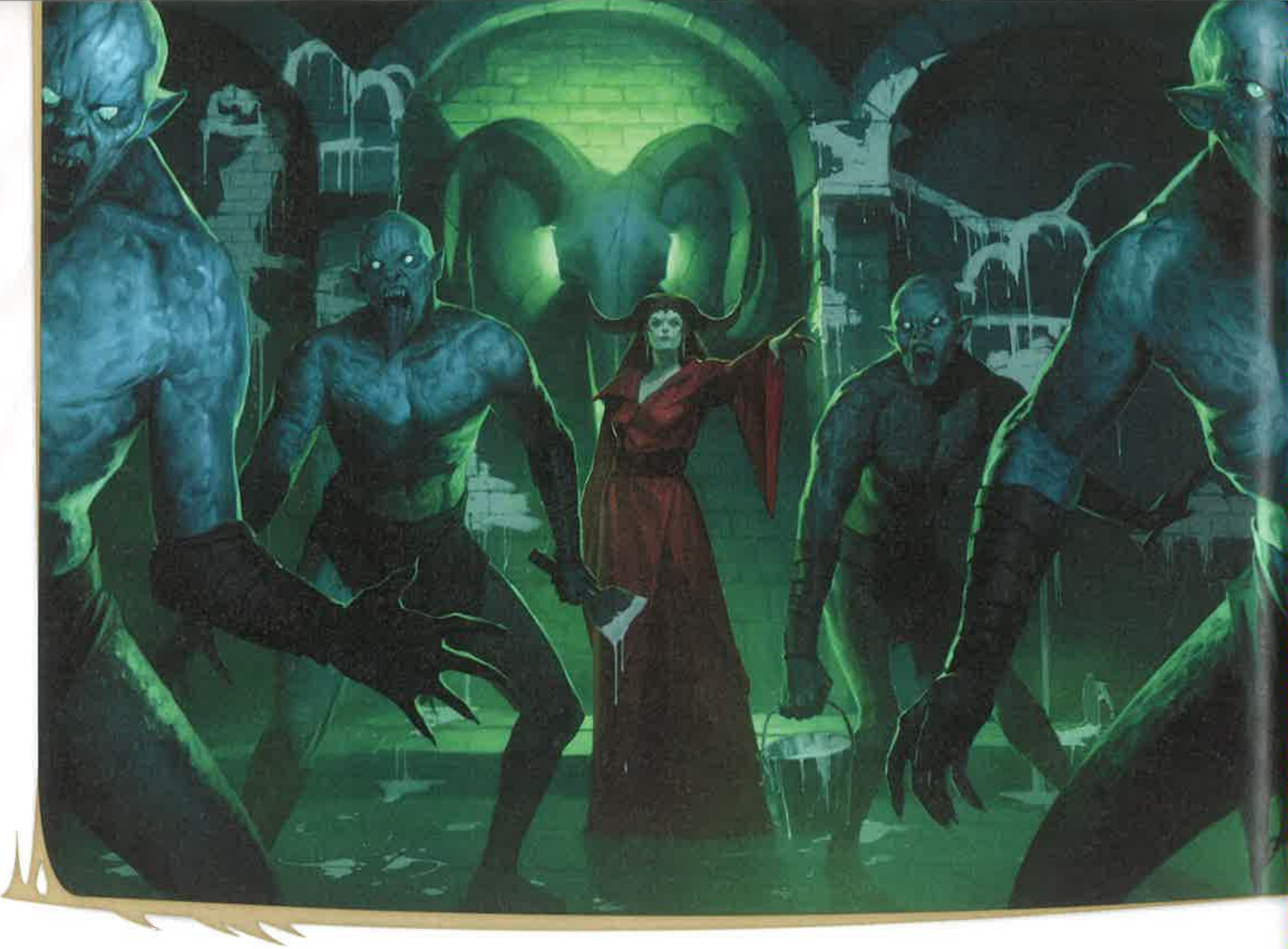
Skeletal Remains. The skeletal remains in the cells are clad in tattered rags and have no equipment or treasure. The skeleton draped over the northern slab is that of the high priest's torturer (see "Treasure" below and "Temple Features" for details).

Treasure. The dead torturer clutches a *+1 Whip*. Behind the loose stone in cell B lies a *Wand of Secrets*.

T12: Ghastly Work

> The stench of death fills this pillared hall. Two ten-foot ladders lean against the west wall. A rotting figure in a crimson robe clings to each ladder, clumsily painting the wall with a brush, while another animated corpse stands at the bottom of each ladder, holding it steady. It's hard to tell what the zombies are painting.
>
> A scowling woman with pallid skin stands in the middle of the hall, presiding over the work. She wears a crimson robe and a horned headdress. Surrounding her are four gaunt creatures with sharp claws, long tongues, and hungry eyes.
>
> The double door at the northern end of the hall stands open, revealing a vast chamber beyond. Swathed in shadows at the back of this large chamber towers a massive statue of a goatish fiend.

The woman is Xia, a **Ghast Gravecaller**. Accompanying her are four **Ghouls**. Xia has tasked four **Zombies** in crimson Robes to paint fluffy white clouds and silver dragons on the wall, in accordance with instructions given to her by the statue of Orcus in the next room (area T13). One zombie steadies each Ladder while another zombie perches precariously near the top, paintbrush and paint pot



in hand. Xia bitterly admonishes the zombies for their shabby work.

At the first sign of trouble, Xia commands her ghouls to fight intruders while she withdraws to area T13 and asks the statue of Orcus for guidance. A booming voice from the statue replies, "This is your final test, Xia. Do not fail me!" Xia then rejoins her ghouls and fights to the bitter end. Roll Initiative for Nezzarum. On his turn, he emerges from the secret door in the back of the statue in area T13 and comes to join the fray, trusting that the adventurers are the heroes he's been waiting for.

Meanwhile, the zombies continue painting and holding Ladders until a character engages them in combat. If either a zombie holding a Ladder or a zombie on a Ladder takes damage, the zombie on the Ladder falls. That zombie falls 10 feet and spills its pot of paint.

Stolen Goods to Recover. The Ladders, pots of paint, and paintbrushes are all stolen goods (see "Stolen Goods").

T13: Great Statue of Orcus

> A great statue of Orcus scrapes the thirty-foot-high ceiling of this chamber. The rich smell of incense rises from a large stone brazier at the statue's base, overpowering the faint lingering odor of death. The demon lord's goat-skull visage glowers at you as statues of cultists gaze outward from the shadowed corners of the hall.

The burning incense in the main temple mostly masks the odor of decay that permeates the hall.

Nezzarum, a **Silver Dragon Wyrmling** who knows Common, lurks inside the statue of Orcus. The dragon can gaze out into the hall through the statue's hollow eyes, nostrils, and mouth. When not manipulating Xia into doing his bidding, Nezzarum passes the time by playing games of dragonchess against himself. The dragonchess set in his possession is stolen (see "Stolen Goods" below).

Roleplaying Nezzarum. Nezzarum has been waiting here in the hope that adventurers would come and defeat Xia and her cult, knowing that he isn't strong enough to defeat them on his own. If combat breaks out in T12 and Nezzarum is aware of it (either because Xia comes and implores the statue of Orcus for aid or because he notices the battle unfolding from his hiding place in the statue), he emerges from the statue and joins the fray. If the characters defeat Xia and Nezzarum survives the encounter, the dragon is Friendly toward them. If the characters approach Nezzarum without first fighting Xia, the dragon is initially Indifferent.

Indifferent Dragon. If Nezzarum hasn't seen the characters prove themselves in battle, he errs on the side of caution and decides to test them. He issues a random command, determined by rolling on the Nezzarum's Commands table, and judges them based on their consequent actions. If they fulfill his wishes, he seems pleased; if they refuse a command, he remains Indifferent toward them.

Each time the characters leave the hall and return, Nezzarum issues a new command until he has issued three of them. He never repeats a command, so if you roll the same result twice, roll again or choose a different option from the table. If the characters fulfill all three of his commands, Nezzarum's attitude toward them shifts to Friendly.

NEZZARUM'S COMMANDS

1d6	Command
1	"Bring me a banquet of cooked meat, steamed vegetables, and fresh fruit!" (Characters can buy the food and have it prepared in town for 3 GP.)
2	"Bring me a wheel of cheese!" (Characters can buy the cheese in town for 5 SP.)
3	"Bring me treasure worthy of a dragon!" (Nezzarum expects at least 100 GP worth of treasure or something of historical value.)
4	"Bring four nice rugs to cover my cold stone floor!" (Characters can buy the rugs in town for 5 GP each.)
5	"Bring me two more pots of silver paint!" (Characters can buy the paint in town for 2 SP per pot.)
6	"Bring me the head of something evil!" (If the characters ask for suggestions, he replies, "Zombies are evil, aren't they? Bring me the head of a zombie!")

Characters struck by the bizarre nature of "Orcus's" commands can take the Search action and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, the character realizes a deception is afoot.

Friendly Dragon. If he becomes Friendly, Nezzarum tells the story of his coming to the temple and the cult's subsequent arrival (see "Adventure Background"). If the characters haven't defeated Xia yet, that's the dragon's highest priority, and he promises to help them fight the ghast and any remaining cultists.

Nezzarum hasn't searched the temple thoroughly enough to locate any other secret doors (besides the one in the base of the statue). He has no objection to the characters searching the temple for treasure if they agree to give him an equal share.

Secret Doors. This hall contains seven secret doors (see "Temple Features"):

Statue Access. A secret door in the base of the Orcus statue pulls open to reveal a winding staircase that ascends to a 10-foot-diameter chamber in the statue's head.

South Wall Exits. Two secret doors in the south wall lead to hallways (areas T9 and T10). The door on the west side (to area T9) is ajar and doesn't require an ability check to locate.

To the Vaults. Four secret doors hidden behind statues each lead to a different vault (see area T14). The area between a statue and a secret door is wide enough for only a Tiny creature to fit comfortably. For a Small or Medium creature, those areas are Difficult Terrain.

Stolen Goods to Recover. The dragonchess Gaming Set and incense are stolen goods (see "Stolen Goods"). If Nezzarum is Friendly, he allows the characters to return the goods the cultists stole to the rightful owners.

T14: Secret Vaults

Four secret vaults are connected to the main temple (area T13), and two more are connected to the hall of statues (area T4). The vaults are basically identical, but each contains a different statue, a different treasure, and a different guardian for that treasure.

> A tunnel leads to a five-sided room. A cobweb-covered statue stands in one corner.

Vault Contents. Use the Statues table to determine each statue's form, the Creatures table to determine the guardian of each vault, and the Treasure table to determine the items stored within (see "Accessing the Vaults' Treasure" below).

Accessing the Vaults' Treasure. Under each statue lies a cylindrical compartment 3 feet across and 3 feet deep. To get at the treasure within, characters must topple or destroy the statue. Each statue is a Medium object with AC 17, HP 18, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. As a Utilize action, a character can try to topple a statue, doing so with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check.

STATUES

1d6	Statue's Form	1d6	Statue's Form
1	Cloaked vampire	4	Mummy lord
2	Death knight	5	Skeletal goat
3	Lich	6	Wraith

CREATURES

1d6	Guardian(s)
1	A Hostile **Swarm of Crawling Claws** nests in the statue's nooks and crannies, emerging to attack when the statue is disturbed.
2	Disturbing the statue causes its head to split open, releasing a Hostile **Flameskull**.
3	The statue acts as a sarcophagus. Disturbing the statue causes it to break apart, freeing the Hostile **Mummy** inside.
4	Disturbing the statue causes four **Specters** to emerge from cavities behind the walls. They pass through the walls and engage the characters in combat.
5	Disturbing the statue causes it to disgorge a Hostile **Black Pudding**.
6	There is no guardian.

TREASURE

1d6	Compartment Contents
1	Basket containing what appears to be the *Wand of Orcus* but is actually a powerless replica (worth 50 GP) that radiates a false magical aura when subjected to a *Detect Magic* spell
2	Malachite skull (worth 250 GP) resting on a bed of 2d6 × 100 GP
3	3-foot-tall statue of Orcus made of crimson marble (worth 750 GP and weighing 75 pounds)
4	Basket containing a randomly determined Common magic item (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*)
5	Casket containing a mummified human corpse in the fetal position wearing a gold necklace (worth 750 GP)
6	Basket containing a randomly determined Uncommon magic item (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*)

Conclusion

After ridding the temple of Xia's cult, the characters can return to Greysmere to collect their reward. Even if they didn't remove every threat, Oriann trusts the characters accomplished their mission and pays them accordingly. The innkeeper gladly takes custody of any stolen goods the characters retrieved from the temple and ensures that they are returned to their proper owners.

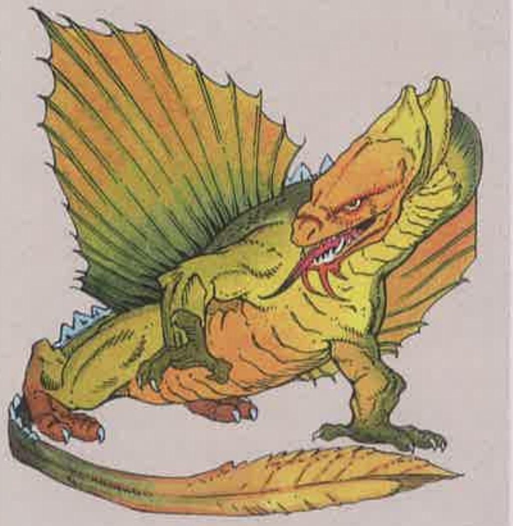
Should the characters reveal that a silver dragon was behind the cult's bizarre activities, Oriann recalls observing a wyrmling soaring among the clouds from time to time, but they know nothing more about it.

JODIE MUIR

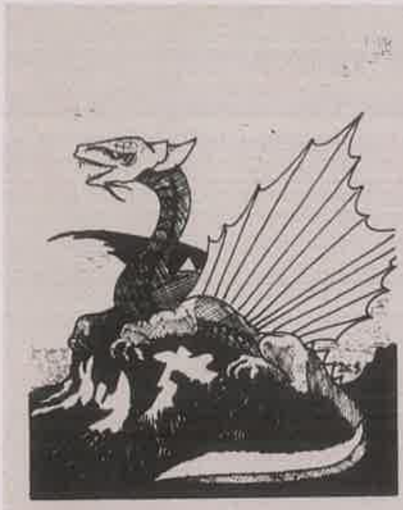
HISTORY OF

BRASS DRAGONS

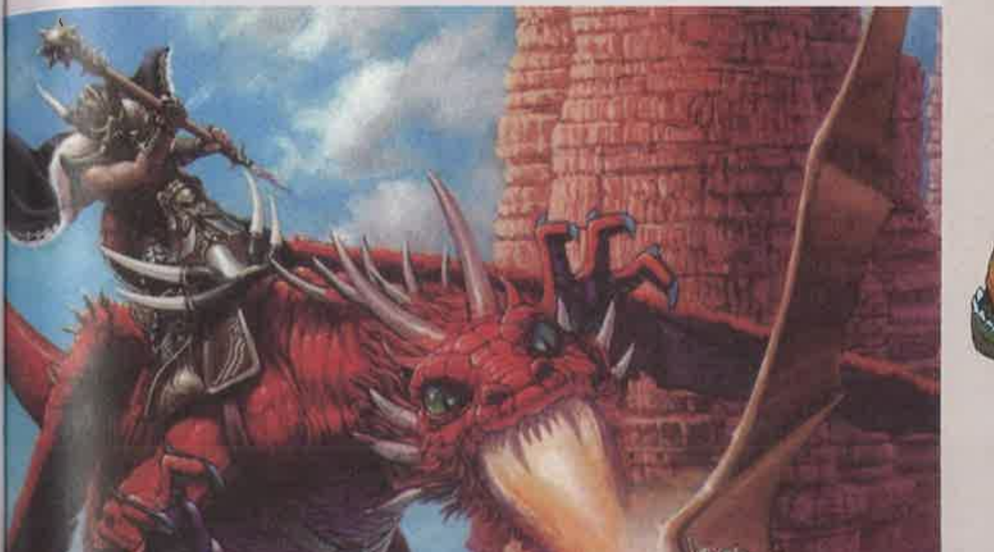
The curling horns seen on the brass dragon Blaize in Keith Parkinson's cover for the Dragonlance adventure *Dragons of Hope* (1984) were a short-lived addition to the look of brass dragons, but later art combined the shape of the horns with the idea of neck plates visible in the earliest depictions of these dragons.



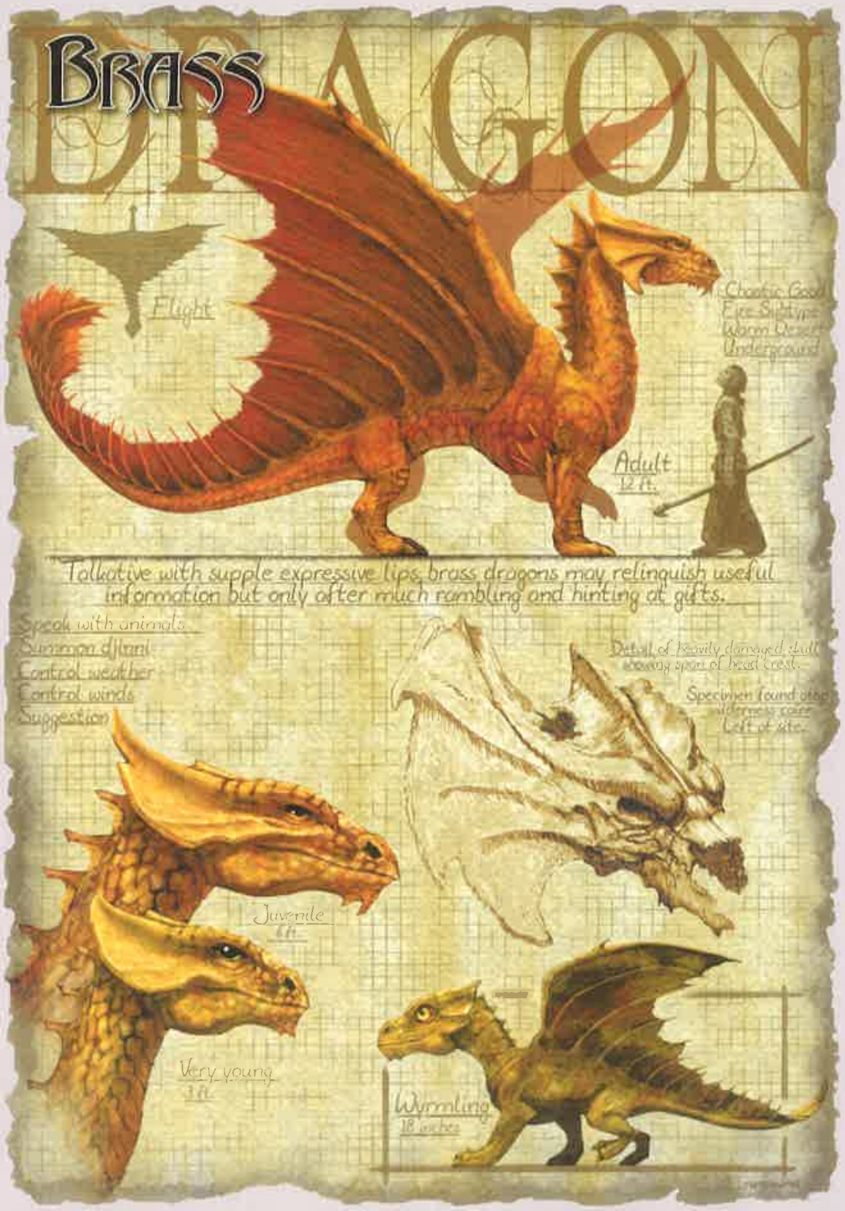
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



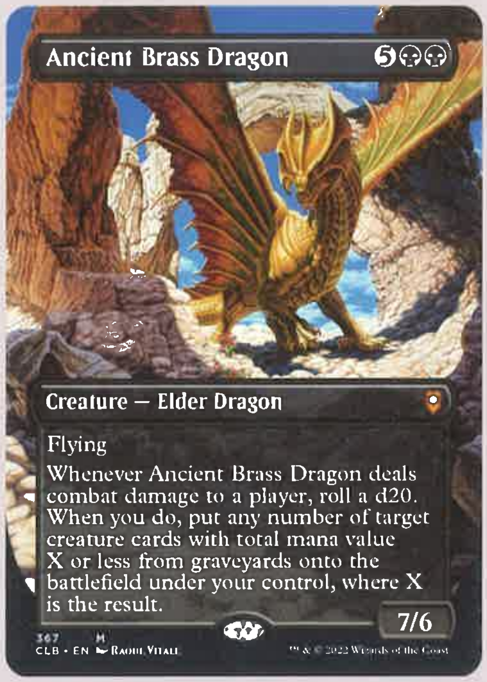
Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland



Dragons of Hope (1984)
Artist: Keith Parkinson


BRASS DRAGON
Flight
Chaotic Good
Fire Subtype
Warm Desert
Underground
Adult
12 ft.
Talkative with supple expressive lips, brass dragons may relinquish useful information but only after much rambling and hinting at gifts.
Speak with animals
Summon djinni
Control weather
Control winds
Suggestion
Detail of heavily damaged skull showing span of head crest.
Specimen found alo
wilderness cara
Left at site.
Juvenile
6 ft.
Very young
3 ft.
Wyrmling
18 inches

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



Ancient Brass Dragon 5

Creature — Elder Dragon

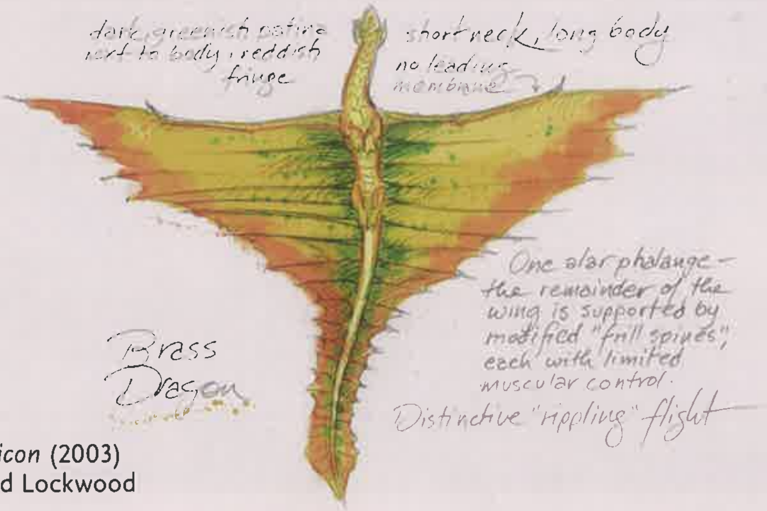
Flying

Whenever Ancient Brass Dragon deals combat damage to a player, roll a d20. When you do, put any number of target creature cards with total mana value X or less from graveyards onto the battlefield under your control, where X is the result.

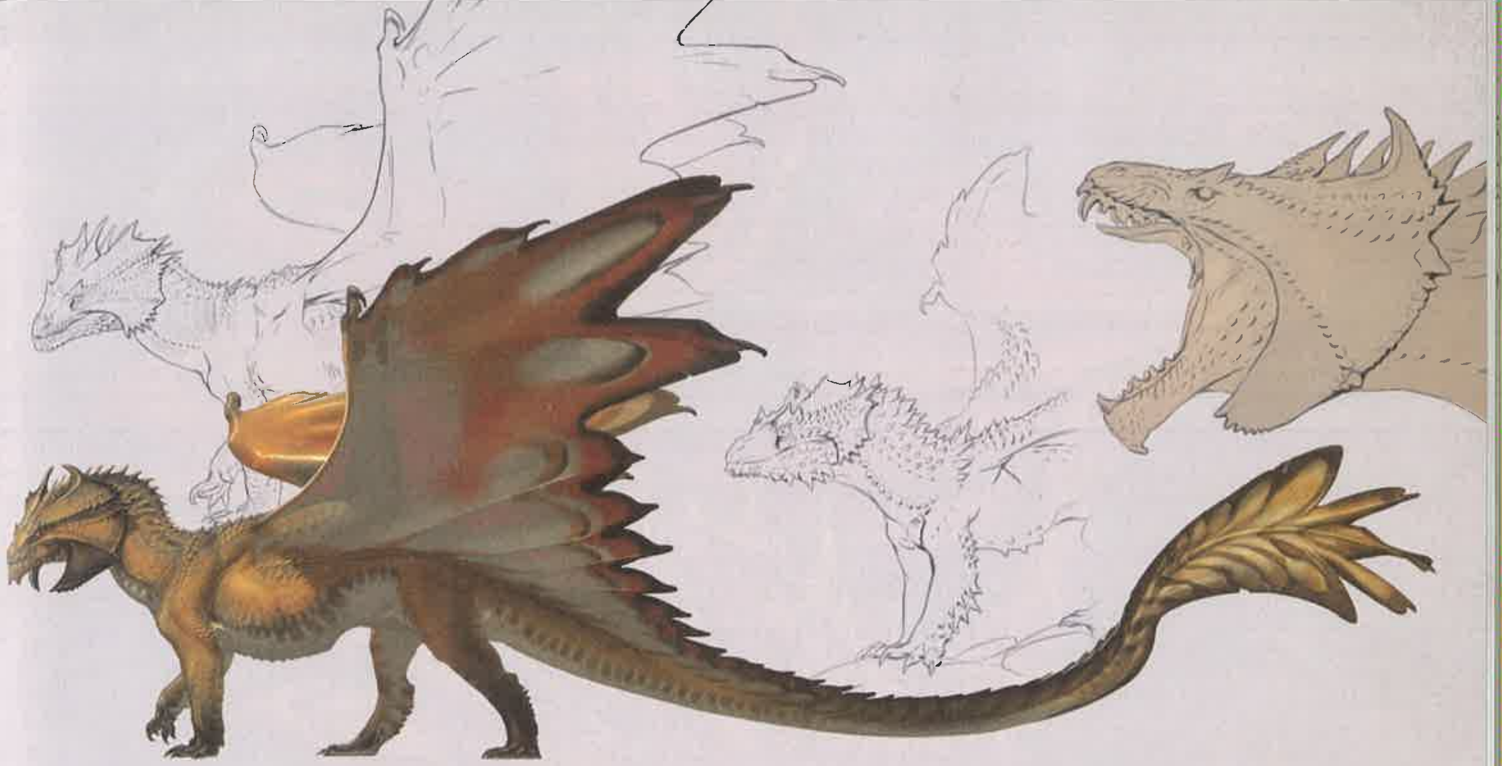
7/6

367 M
CLB • EN Raoul Vitale
™ & © 2022 Wizards of the Coast

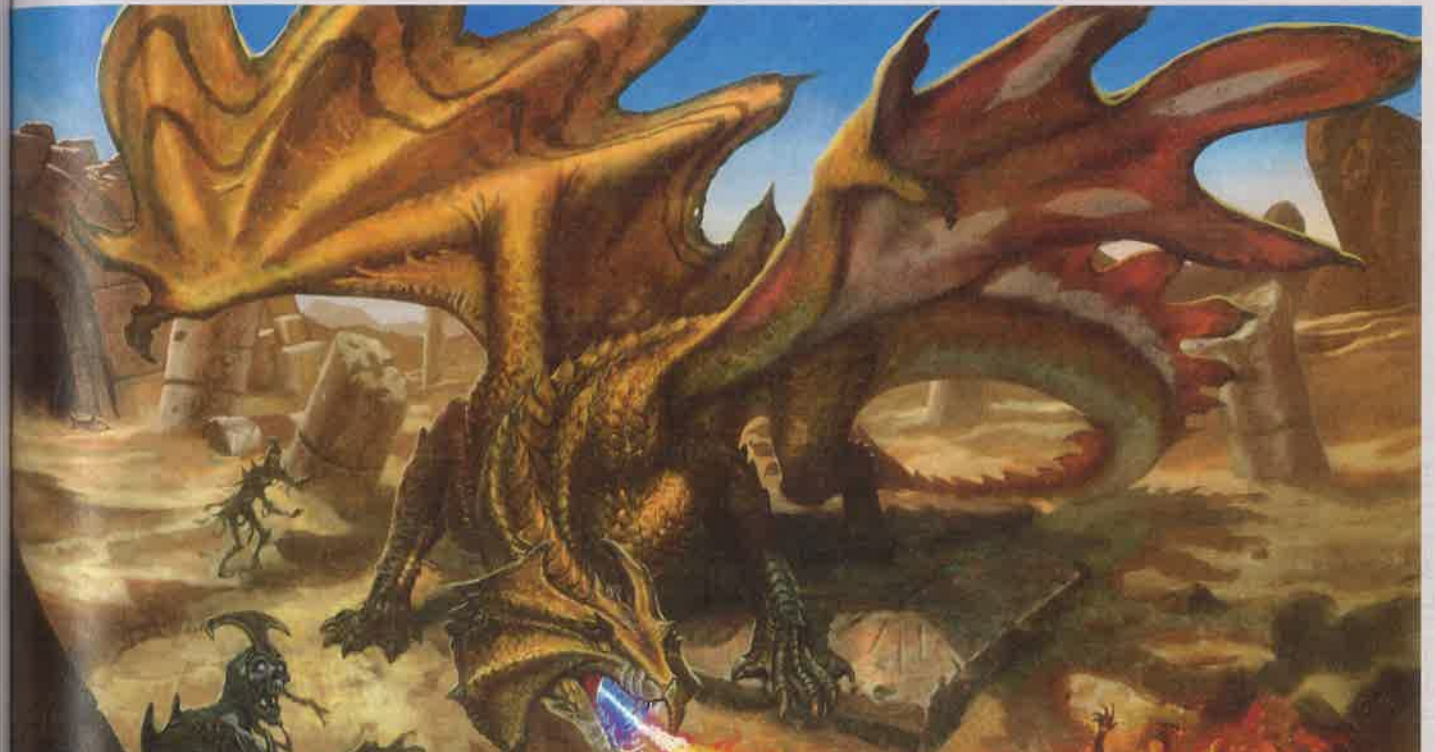
Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate (2022)
Artist: Raoul Vitale


dark greenish patina next to body, reddish fringe
short neck, long body
no leading membrane
One alar phalange - the remainder of the wing is supported by modified "frill spines", each with limited muscular control.
Distinctive "rippling" flight
Brass Dragon

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Caio Monteiro

CHAPTER 4

For Whom the Void Calls

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 5
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN ANY CANYON WITH A RIVER FLOWING THROUGH IT.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Distress Call. The adventurers receive a telepathic distress signal. The signal's sender claims to be a sentient *Bag of Holding* recently stolen by an evil dragon. The bag begs for rescue.

Far Realm Connection. Unknown to the adventurers, the sender of the distress signal is actually a *Bag of Devouring*. It's the feeding orifice of an evil extradimensional creature that resides in the Far Realm and can telepathically contact creatures within 1 mile of the bag.

Starglass Waypoint. Characters who answer the telepathic distress call are led to Starglass Waypoint, which once housed a planar gateway and now serves as the lair of a young brass dragon named Ylagan. The *Bag of Devouring* lies amid the dragon's hoard. As they explore Starglass Waypoint, the characters might find themselves confronted by a stern githyanki knight, distraught modrons, and a dragon who is fed up with the way treasure keeps disappearing from his magic bag.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section.

Step 2. Review area S18 in "Upper Level Locations." If you find it too complicated, feel free to skip this section.

Step 3. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table below. The characters will interact with these NPCs throughout the adventure.

Step 4. Read about the *Bag of Devouring* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or on D&D Beyond. Optionally, look at the descriptions of the Astral Plane and the Far Realm.

Step 5. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Brass Dragon, Young
Earth Elemental
Githyanki Knight
Invisible Stalker
Kobold, Winged
Mimic
Modron Duodrone
Modron Quadrone
Modron Tridrone
Shambling Mound
Slaad, Blue
Spectator
Water Elemental

KEY NPCS

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Bobsin	Thief	**Winged Kobold**	S24
Keliphron	Sentient *Bag of Devouring* that claims to be a *Bag of Holding*	—	S12
Qaara Valreth	Defends the outpost's modrons	**Githyanki Knight** (Lawful Neutral)	S18
Ylagan	Dragon whose hoard contains the *Bag of Devouring*	**Young Brass Dragon**	S10

JUSTINE JONES

Adventure Background

Over one hundred years ago, githyanki and modrons built Starglass Waypoint as a creche—a secure and isolated location to raise and train their young. A planar gateway deep within the outpost allowed the githyanki to come and go freely from the Astral Plane. Nine years ago, after an earthquake damaged the planar gateway, the githyanki abandoned the outpost but left the outpost's modron caretakers behind.

A year ago, a young brass dragon named Ylagan claimed the outpost as his lair.

The Bag of Devouring

When Ylagan arrived almost a year ago, the modrons accepted his leadership and set about repurposing the outpost to serve the dragon's needs. Ylagan, meanwhile, scoured the lands around Starglass Waypoint for treasure to add to his meager hoard. One week ago, he spotted the remains of an adventurer who had died of thirst. Among the adventurer's possessions was a magic bag that the dragon mistook for a *Bag of Holding*.

Ylagan brought the bag home and stored several of his favorite gemstones inside. The next day, he was horrified to find the bag empty. Unaware that it was actually a *Bag of Devouring* and had devoured the gemstones, Ylagan instructed the modrons to search the outpost for thieves. When no intruders were found, the dragon began harboring fears that one or more modrons might have stolen the gems.

Two days ago, Ylagan put his theory to the test by placing some less valuable treasure in the bag and leaving it unguarded while he stood watch at the outpost's entrance. A day later, the bag was empty! Ylagan accused the modrons of stealing his treasure and destroyed several of them in a rage. He then used rubble to seal off the tunnel leading to his hoard and began hunting down the remaining modrons.

The destroyed modrons disintegrated, leaving no trace. One of the modron survivors activated a silent alarm in the outpost's command center, which sent a signal to a githyanki fortress on the Astral Plane.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventurers are traveling through a canyon when they receive a telepathic distress signal. Read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

> You're traveling through a silent canyon with no sign of birds or animals. Even the mineral-rich river, with its turquoise water, is still. Striations of coppery red and slate blue decorate the canyon's walls. Sometimes, a patch of air shimmers with intense heat, and the canyon's colors seem to dance, undulating under the searing sun.
>
> The eerie silence is broken by a deep, baritone voice. "Hello, can you help me?"
>
> No other creatures are nearby, so it takes a moment to realize the voice is in your heads. "Please, I've been taken by a dragon!"

The telepathic signal originates from the extraplanar creature attached to the *Bag of Devouring*, which can sense other creatures within 1 mile of the bag. It relays the following information:

> "My name is Keliphron. I was traveling with a companion named Argus when the dragon found us and carried me to its lair. I fear the dragon will never let me go. Save me if you can!"

After receiving Keliphron's message, a character can take a Search action and make a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, a character senses that Keliphron is being truthful but vague.

Questions and Answers

Keliphron answers three questions before severing telepathic contact with the characters. Under no circumstances does Keliphron reveal its true nature. Here are some likely questions the characters might ask and Keliphron's answers:

Who Are You? "I'm a *Bag of Holding* imbued with sentience. Rescue me and I'm yours!"

Where Are You? "If you continue on your present course, you will find a shimmering crystal bridge spanning the river that runs through the canyon. The bridge leads to the entrance of the dragon's subterranean lair, deep within the canyon wall."

Who Is Argus? "Argus was my previous owner."

Did the Dragon Kill Argus? "No, Argus died of thirst shortly before the dragon found us."

What Can You Tell Us about the Dragon? "The dragon hungers for treasure and is big enough to carry a person on its back." (Keliphron can't perceive colors, so it can't discern the color of the dragon's scales.)

What Can You Tell Us about the Dragon's Lair? "It doesn't look like a dragon's lair. Someone else probably built it. The lair is also home to peculiar metallic creatures—they obey the dragon's commands." (Keliphron is referring to modrons but doesn't know how else to describe them.)

If the characters decide not to rescue Keliphron, it reestablishes telepathic contact one last time and urges them to reconsider. It then describes other treasures in the dragon's hoard (see area S12), hoping the characters' greed gets the better of them. If that doesn't work, Keliphron tells them the dragon is harming the metallic creatures that inhabit its lair and urges the characters to intercede on the creatures' behalf.

Approaching Starglass Waypoint

After the characters have resumed their trek and made their way along the canyon for almost a mile, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> Arching gently over the stagnant river ahead of you is a crystal bridge that captures and radiates natural light. The bridge connects to a stone platform set into the canyon wall twenty feet above the river. Graceful stone arches on the far end enclose an elegant double door made of glass and brass.

The canyon is 200 feet deep, though the river is only 10 feet deep. The crystal bridge is safe to cross and leads to the double door (area S1). During the day, the bridge blazes with the golden light of the sun; at night, it glows with the moon's pale illumination (Dim Light).

Starglass Waypoint

When Starglass Waypoint's gateway to and from the Astral Plane was damaged by an earthquake and began to malfunction, the githyanki couldn't repair it, so they abandoned the outpost. Soon after, the outpost became a forgotten ruin inhabited only by the modrons the githyanki left behind.

Until recently, Ylagan the brass dragon relied on the modrons to help build his lair. He has since destroyed many of them.

Starglass Waypoint Features

Unless otherwise specified, Starglass Waypoint has the following features.

Glassteel Doors

All doors in the complex are made of a magical substance called glassteel, which has the texture and transparency of glass and tremendous resilience. The doors have Immunity to all damage.

Certain doors are sealed by magic (as indicated on maps 4.1 and 4.2). Each of these is engraved with an asterisk-shaped glyph that feels warm to the touch. Unlocking a sealed door requires either a Glyph Card or a *Knock* spell.

Glyph Cards. A Glyph Card is a ceramic tile roughly the size of a playing card, engraved with an asterisk-shaped glyph and inlaid with blue crystal. The glyph on the card matches the glyph on the Starglass Waypoint's sealed doors. Outpost staff and guests used Glyph Cards as passkeys. The cards can now be found in various locations inside the outpost.

Touching a Glyph Card to a sealed door unlocks it; the door remains unlocked for 1 minute. Once opened, such a door can be propped open to keep it from locking again.

Levels and Elevators

The outpost has an upper level and a lower level; the Astral gate chamber (area S12) lies 10 feet below the lower level. Glass staircases connect these levels, as do four elevators powered by magic and hidden gears.

Elevators. Each elevator consists of a mechanical lift inside a two-story housing with sealed, sliding glassteel doors (see "Glassteel Doors" above). Once inside the elevator, a creature can command it to ascend or descend as a Magic action by saying or signing "up" or "down" in any language. The elevator's doors must be opened and closed manually. It takes 6 seconds to move from one floor to another.

Lighting

Unless otherwise noted, magical crystal sconces affixed to the walls light all locations in the complex with Bright Light. A creature can turn a sconce on or off by tapping it.

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings

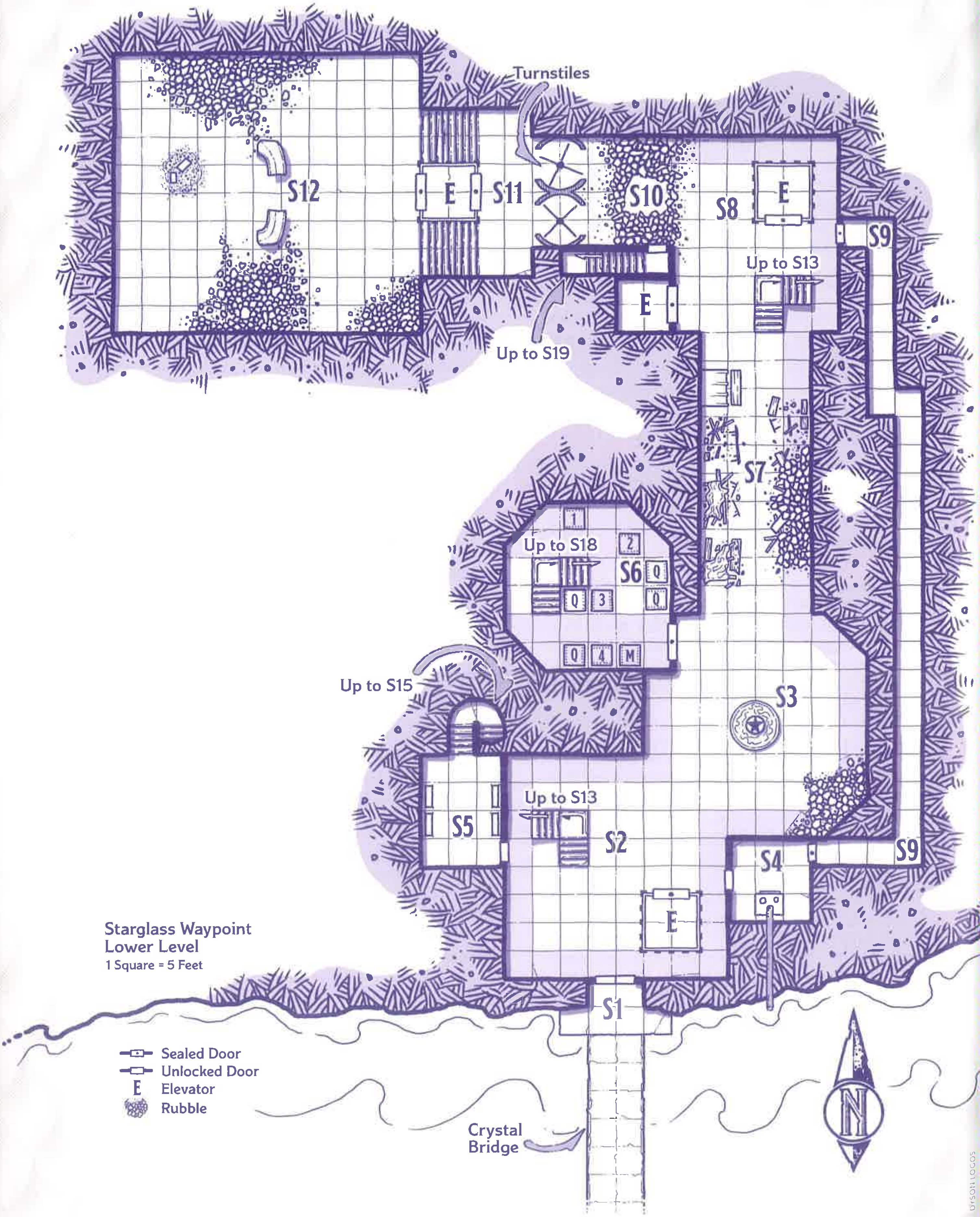
The walls, floors, and ceilings are made of smooth gray stone and thick panels of frosted blue glass. Ceilings are 20 feet high in two-story areas (areas S2, S3, S7, and S8), 60 feet high in the Astral gate chamber (area S12), and 10 feet high everywhere else.

Lower Level Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 4.1.

S1: Doors of Glass and Brass

The front doors leading to the atrium (area S2) are unlocked and unobstructed. They swing open easily on well-oiled hinges.


Turnstiles
S12
E
S11
S10
S8
E
S9
Up to S13
E
Up to S19
S7
1
Up to S18
2
S6
Q
Q
3
Q
Q
4
M
Up to S15
S3
Up to S13
S5
S2
S4
S9
E
S1
Starglass Waypoint
Lower Level
1 Square = 5 Feet
Sealed Door
Unlocked Door
E Elevator
Rubble
Crystal
Bridge
N

DYSON LOGOS

MAP 4.1: STARGLASS WAYPOINT LOWER LEVEL

S2: Atrium

> In this atrium, a glass staircase climbs ten feet to a balcony that wraps around the atrium's perimeter. A sealed enclosure made of metal and glass holds a lift that also rises to meet the balcony.
>
> Glass doors lead out to the east and west. To the northeast is a chamber with a crystal fountain as its centerpiece.

The fountain is described in area S3. The balcony is described in area S13. "Starglass Waypoint Features" offers information about the sconces and elevator.

S3: Fountain Court

> An elegant crystal fountain adorns the middle of this court. The fountain's centerpiece is a beautiful crystal statue of a knight wearing a helm and ornate armor, her hands clasped around the hilt of a crystal greatsword; its tip is planted in front of her feet.
>
> Rubble lies strewn in one corner where part of the overhanging balcony has collapsed. To the north, a concourse twenty feet wide contains more rubble and the remains of several merchant stalls. On the west side of the court is a wide, sliding glass door.

The sliding glass door leading to the supply room (area S6) requires a Glyph Card to open (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"). The merchants' concourse is described in area S7, and the balcony is described in areas S13 and S16.

Crystal Fountain. Closer examination of the fountain reveals stagnant, murky water. If the water is disturbed, a Hostile **Water Elemental** lurking in the fountain ambushes the characters.

As a Study action, a character can examine the fountain's statue and make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. On a success, the character recognizes that the statue depicts Gith, the legendary warrior who helped liberate her people—the githyanki and the githzerai—from the tyranny of mind flayers.

Treasure. Characters who spend 10 minutes sifting through the fountain's basin find a Glyph Card and 25 GP in loose coins.

S4: Forge

> Rusty tools hang from hooks on the walls of this dusty workshop. A door on the east wall is closed.
>
> Sitting against the south wall is a large cast-iron stove. A metal pipe one foot in diameter rises two feet from the top of the stove before embedding itself in the wall. The stove makes a strange rattling.

Githyanki smiths crafted tools and armor here. The stove's interior can hold one Medium creature or two Small creatures; its pipe is too narrow for Small or Medium creatures to enter.

The rattling comes from a nervous **Modron Duodrone** cowering inside the stove. Characters who open the stove's iron doors spot the Indifferent modron, which knows Modron and Common Sign Language.

The duodrone is hiding from Ylagan and prefers to be left alone. If the characters pester it, the duodrone produces a Glyph Card (see "Starglass Waypoint Features") from a slot in its body, hands the card to them, and indicates that it has no other information or treasure to offer. The duodrone fights only in self-defense.

S5: Library

> A roughly spherical creature with a large central eye and four eyestalks hovers in the middle of this room. It floats between four empty bookcases with glass doors. A staircase ascends to the north.

The floating creature is an alert **Spectator**, which was mistakenly summoned to guard the bookcases, not the books. When the githyanki abandoned Starglass Waypoint, they removed all the books so they wouldn't be stolen or damaged. The spectator is Indifferent initially but becomes Hostile toward and fights creatures (other than githyanki or modrons) that disturb the bookcases.

The creature telepathically shares the following information if questioned:

Old Outpost. Starglass Waypoint was built by githyanki and modrons around a planar gate. (The spectator has never left this room and doesn't know the gate's location.)

Modron Caretakers. The githyanki abandoned the outpost years ago but left modrons behind to maintain it.

Draconic Newcomer. A dragon with brass scales arrived at the outpost almost one year ago and made itself at home. The modrons in the outpost have trouble communicating with the dragon but try to keep it happy.

S6: Secured Supplies

> This almost octagonal room contains sealed crates with metal fittings. A glass staircase climbs to an overhanging level; a faint hum comes from above.

The stairs ascend to the security station (area S18).

Crates. The locations of the crates are shown on map 4.1. Four crates (marked 1 through 4) are real. The crates marked with a *Q* are actually four **Modron Quadrones** with their legs retracted and weapons hidden from view. (They aren't present if they were previously drawn to area S18.) Any character who has a Passive Perception of 14+ recognizes a disguised quadrone once the character gets within 5 feet of it. The crate marked with an *M* is actually a **Mimic** hoping for a good meal, since it doesn't eat modrons.

If anyone other than a modron or githyanki tampers with any of the real crates or with the mimic, the quadrones attack. They are otherwise Indifferent toward intruders and fight only in self-defense. They know Modron and Common Sign Language.

Treasure. The four real crates contain goods the githyanki left behind; Ylagan hasn't realized there are valuables in these crates and so hasn't claimed them for his hoard:

Crates 1 and 2 each contain one hundred Rations, which have been magically preserved to make them edible despite being decades old.

Crate 3 contains forty-nine 5-pound silver trade bars (worth 25 GP each). One silver bar is clearly missing (it's in the sinkhole in area S24).

Crate 4 contains clockwork gears, springs, chains, and other replacement parts for the outpost's elevators. Amid this loose junk is a flat pine box containing a *Clockwork Amulet*.

S7: Merchants' Concourse

> Seven merchant stalls line the walls of this twenty-foot-wide concourse. Five stalls are in varying stages of decrepitude. The other two are crushed under rubble from a partially collapsed balcony along the east wall. High up on the west wall are two closed windows.

See areas S13 and S17 for descriptions of the balcony.

Treasure. A character who rummages through a stall for 1 minute (or 1 hour for a stall buried under rubble) can take a Search action to make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, finding treasure on a success. Once a stall's treasure has been found, nothing else of value remains there.

The first stall the characters search is empty. The characters discover the other stalls' treasures in the following order:

1. Crystal box (worth 20 GP) containing four *Potions of Comprehension*
2. Gold ring set with bloodstones (worth 250 GP)
3. Tapestry depicting a red dragon (worth 750 GP)
4. *Potion of Healing* (greater)
5. Fire opal (worth 1,000 GP)
6. *Mithral Armor* (Breastplate)

Windows. Windows overlook the concourse 13 feet above the western floor. They are made of glassteel (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"). The windows allow a view into two luxury suites (areas S21 and S22).

S8: Ylagan's Watch

> A glass staircase and a glass-enclosed elevator climb to a ten-foot-high balcony that hugs the north and east walls of this atrium. The sliding door of another elevator is embedded in the west wall in the southwest corner. A door on the east wall stands closed. A tunnel heading west is blocked by a wall of neatly piled rubble twenty feet high and wide.
>
> Although this atrium appears uninhabited, you can't shake the feeling that you're being watched!

The first time the characters arrive here, the sentient *Bag of Devouring* in the Astral gate chamber (area S12) telepathically contacts them again:

> "You are close now. Beyond the rubble lies the dragon's hoard. That is where you will find me."

Ylagan the **Young Brass Dragon** watches the group from inside the wall of rubble (area S10).

S9: Maintenance Corridor

> The door opens to reveal a narrow, twisting corridor filled with a rainbow-colored haze.

When githyanki inhabited the outpost, modrons used this corridor to circumvent crowded areas. The corridor is Lightly Obscured by the rainbow-colored gas, which is an unexplainable phenomenon.

While in the area of the gas and for 1 minute after exiting, a creature has the Poisoned condition, which manifests as acute nausea and disorientation. The gas doesn't spread to other areas of the outpost. It can be cleared temporarily using the control panel in the security station (area S18).

S10: Dragon in the Rubble

Ylagan erected a 10-foot-thick wall of rubble 20 feet high and wide to seal off access to his hoard in the Astral gate chamber (area S12). Using his Burrow speed, Ylagan can pass through the rubble easily, and he's adept at quickly rebuilding the wall behind (or around) him to prevent others from getting through it.

When the characters first arrive, the **Young Brass Dragon** has buried himself in the rubble along with an **Earth Elemental** he summoned from the *Stone of Controlling Earth Elementals* in his hoard. The elemental obeys the dragon's commands. Both have Total Cover. While buried, Ylagan uses Blindsight and the elemental uses Tremorsense to perceive what's happening outside the wall.

Roleplaying Ylagan. The Hostile young dragon assumes the characters are returning to the Astral gate chamber (area S12) to steal more of his treasure, having succeeded at least once already. As an Influence action, a character can try to convince Ylagan they aren't responsible for the thefts, doing so with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Once convinced the characters aren't the thieves he's after, Ylagan fights them only if they endanger him or his hoard. Furthermore, he asks them to help find the thief stealing gems from his hoard. If the characters demand a reward, Ylagan says he has a magical cloak (the *Cloak of Many Fashions* from his hoard) he's willing to part with in exchange for their help.

Ylagan seems skeptical of any claim that the characters were lured to Starglass Waypoint by a telepathic bag, but he's smart enough to know that some magic items are sentient, so he doesn't dismiss the claim. If the characters offer to buy the bag, Ylagan is willing to sell it to them for 2,000 GP in coins or other valuables. (If they strike such a deal, the dragon insists the characters remain where they are while he fetches the bag.)

Ylagan in Combat. If the characters say or do anything to suggest they intend to kill him or plunder his hoard, Ylagan uses his Sleep Breath on them from his hiding place, trying to catch as many characters in its area as possible. He then bursts from the rubble and fights any characters not put to sleep by the gas.

In combat, whenever Ylagan starts his turn Bloodied, he makes a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, Ylagan's instinct for self-preservation kicks in, and he flees by the safest route, either returning to his hoard (area S12) or leaving the outpost. The dragon values his own life more than his hoard. He holds a grudge against those who force him to flee, however.

Clearing the Rubble. A character can clear one 5-foot cube of rubble in 10 minutes. Multiple characters working together can shorten the time proportionately.

Hidden Door. The rubble obscures a door in the south wall, behind which a staircase leads up to a hallway (area S19).

S11: Access Way

Two floor-to-ceiling stone turnstiles block the way to the Astral gate chamber (area S12). The turnstile walls can be manually rotated counterclockwise to allow a Large or smaller creature to pass through. The turnstiles are Difficult Terrain for Large creatures (including Ylagan).

West of the turnstiles, creatures can descend 10 feet to the Astral gate chamber (area S12) via a glass-walled elevator or the staircases that flank it (see "Starglass Waypoint Features").

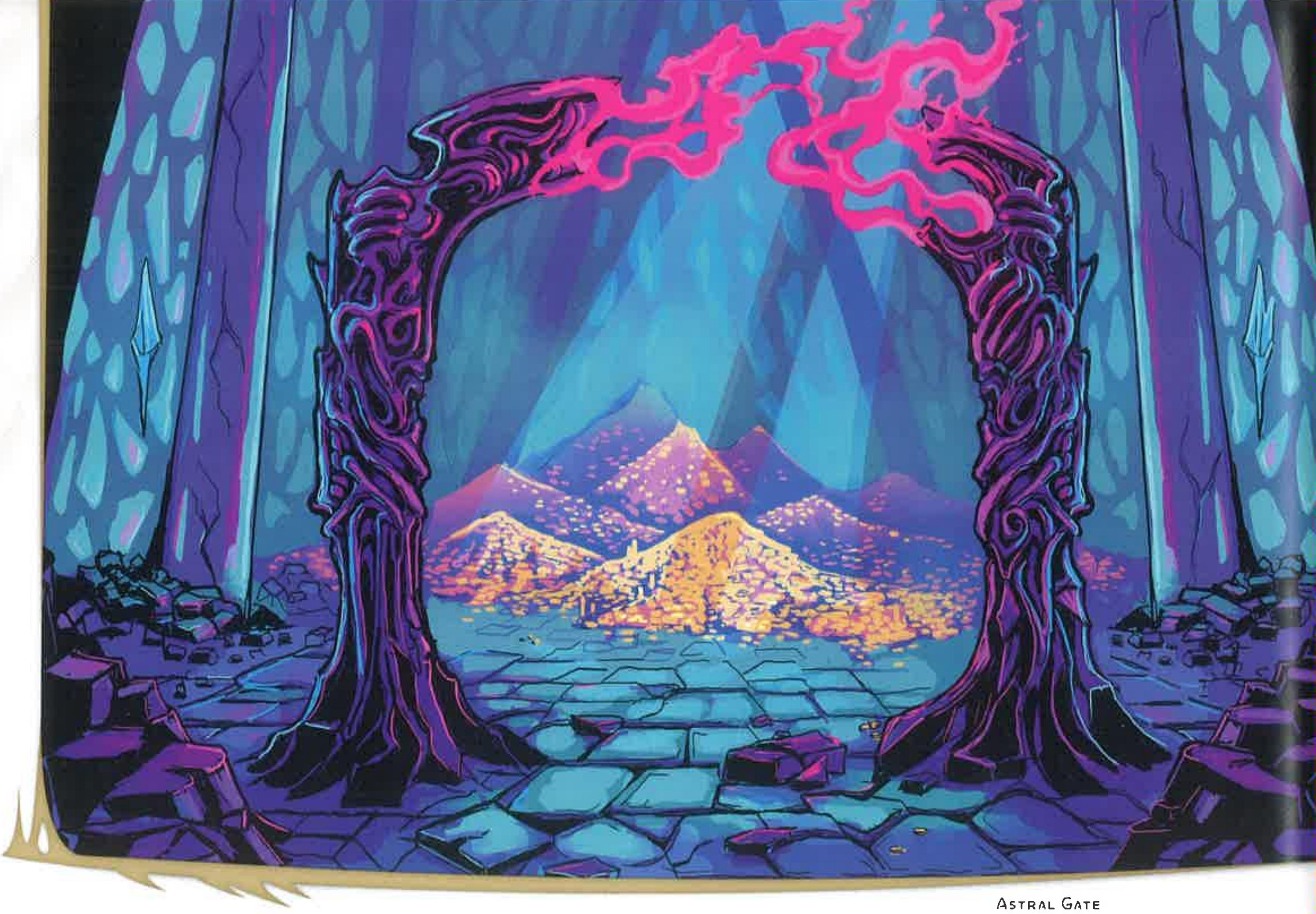
S12: Astral Gate

> The walls of this spacious chamber slant inward, converging 60 feet above the floor to form the apex of a pyramid-like structure. Rubble is piled against the walls.
>
> The room's centerpiece, an archway of purple stone, stands twenty feet tall. The arch has a gap at the top. Bright purple embers spew from the broken halves of the arch and trail upward like smoke. Behind the arch, gathered into a neat pile, lies a hoard of coins and other treasures.

The piles of rubble are Difficult Terrain.

Astral Gate. The purple arch used to be a two-way portal to a githyanki city on the Astral Plane. The gate has been irreparably damaged and no longer functions properly. Any creature that moves into the space between the two halves of the arch or starts its turn there takes 11 (2d10) Psychic damage.

Dragon's Hoard. Unless Ylagan has retreated to this chamber, the dragon's trove is unguarded. It consists of the following:



Astral Gate

Justine Jones

- 600 GP, 9,000 SP, and 45,000 CP in loose coins
- Bronze urn containing eight flawed rubies (worth 50 GP each) and a silver necklace with moonstone teardrops (worth 750 GP)
- Seven jade orbs (worth 100 GP each), each engraved in Infernal with the name of a layer of the Nine Hells (Avernus, Dis, Minauros, Phlegethos, Malbolge, Maladomini, and Cania; the orbs for Stygia and Nessus are missing from Ylagan's collection)
- *Bag of Devouring* that appears to be an empty *Bag of Holding* (see "Keliphron" below)
- *Cloak of Many Fashions* that's neatly folded
- *+1 Spear*
- *Stone of Controlling Earth Elementals*

Keliphron. Once found, Keliphron behaves like any other *Bag of Devouring*. Objects the bag consumes and later spits out are ejected into the Far Realm and lost.

Upper Level Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 4.2.

S13: Balcony

This 10-foot-high balcony overlooks the eastern end of the outpost's lower level (areas S2, S3, S7, and S8). Made of smoothly sculpted stone, the balcony has 3-foot-high railings that consist of taut metal cables strung between brass posts spaced 5 feet apart.

Earthquakes caused the balcony to collapse in two places—see areas S16 and S17 for details.

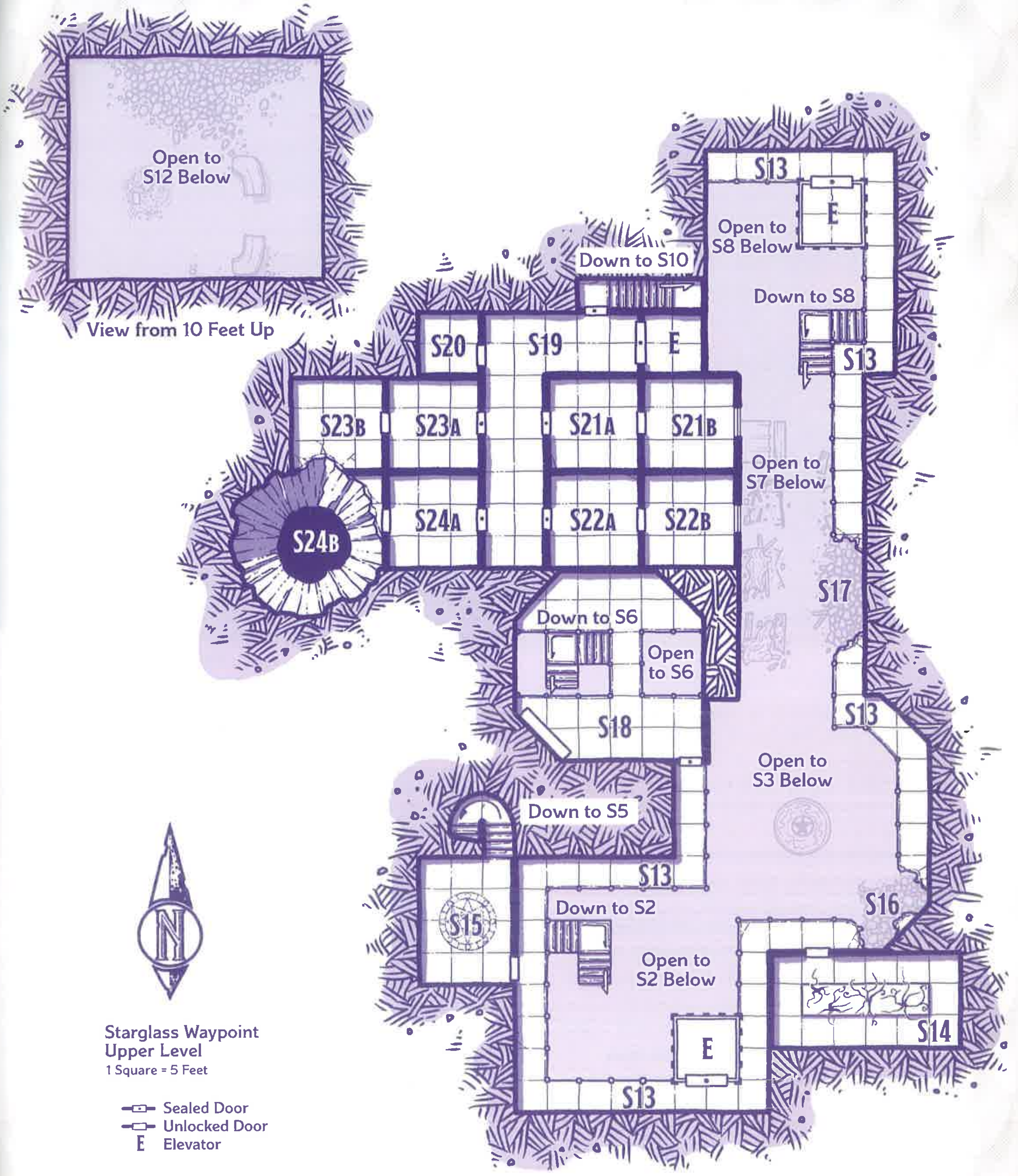
S14: Abandoned Garden

> Magical light fills this rectangular room. The light emanates from three glass domes attached to the ceiling above a five-foot-wide, twenty-foot-long plant bed overflowing with rotting vegetation.

Closer inspection of the plant bed reveals two rusty protrusions among the vines; these are the heads of water sprinklers that now merely drip rusty water.

If any character comes within 5 feet of the plant bed, read:

> The rotting vegetation gathers up into two writhing masses that shamble toward you.


Open to S12 Below
View from 10 Feet Up
Down to S10
S13
E
Open to S8 Below
Down to S8
S20
S19
E
S13
S23B
S23A
S21A
S21B
Open to S7 Below
S24B
S24A
S22A
S22B
S17
Down to S6
Open to S6
S18
S13
Open to S3 Below
Down to S5
S13
S16
Down to S2
S15
Open to S2 Below
S14
E
S13
N
Starglass Waypoint Upper Level
1 Square = 5 Feet
Sealed Door
Unlocked Door
E Elevator

Map 4.2: Starglass Waypoint Upper Level

Dyson Logos

The vines become two **Shambling Mounds** that fight intruders. The creatures pursue fleeing prey but collapse into inanimate vegetation after 1 hour if not destroyed before then.

S15: Teleportation Circle

> Inscribed on the floor of this otherwise empty room is a ten-foot-diameter circle that incorporates geometric symbols and arcane glyphs.

The circle on the floor is a permanent teleportation circle (see the *Teleportation Circle* spell in the *Player's Handbook*).

S16: Collapsed Balcony

Part of the balcony has collapsed at this point, creating a 10-foot gap. A creature that tries and fails to jump the gap falls 10 feet into area S3.

S17: Collapsed Balcony

A 15-foot-long stretch of balcony has collapsed here. A creature that tries and fails to jump the gap falls 10 feet into area S7.

S18: Security Station

This is a complex location, so review it carefully before reading the following text to the players to set the scene:

> This area is brightly lit by crystal sconces spaced along the walls. The floor is one large balcony that overhangs a supply room on the lower level, with a glass staircase to connect them. Cables stretch between brass posts to form a railing around the balcony.
>
> Against the southwest wall sits a humming metal console with several switches and a flashing red bulb on its slanted top. Mounted on the wall above it is an oval plate of dark glass. A blocky creature clutches a small ceramic card in one of its mechanical hands as it waits nervously by the console.

The creature next to the console, a **Modron Duodrone**, is Indifferent toward intruders. The duodrone knows Modron and Common Sign Language. If assailed, the duodrone emits an audible cry for help, prompting the four **Modron Quadrones** in the supply room below (area S6) to move up to defend it. For more information about the console, see "Using the Console" below.

Using a Glyph Card (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"), the duodrone retreated to this location to avoid the enraged brass dragon. The duodrone then activated a silent alarm and caused the light bulb on the console to flash red.

Qaara's Arrival. The silent alarm triggers a response from a githyanki outpost on the Astral Plane. At a moment of your choosing, a Lawful Neutral **Githyanki Knight** named Qaara Valreth teleports into the room, appearing in an unoccupied space as close to the console as possible. Describe her arrival as follows:

> Silvery motes of light swirl in the air before coalescing into a gaunt, green-skinned figure clad in ornate plate armor and holding a silver greatsword.

Qaara knows Gith and Common Sign Language. She uses the latter to try to communicate with any creature she encounters that doesn't know Gith, hoping to learn what's going on.

Qaara is initially Indifferent toward the characters unless they're fighting one or more modrons or admit to ill intentions against the modrons; in that case, she is Hostile toward the characters and defends the modrons.

Civil but unhelpful, Qaara wants to find out why the alarm was triggered, then return to the Astral Plane. She has no interest in the characters' quest or the dragon's claim to the outpost. If the characters describe Ylagan's violence against the modrons, Qaara says she will report the dragon's behavior to her allies on the Astral Plane, but she makes no promises the githyanki will interfere. She refuses to take orders, and if the characters treat her badly, she tries to frighten them into leaving the outpost—but stops short of fighting them without provocation.

Using the Console. The console is a quirky piece of modron technology. Any character who spends 1 minute examining it as a Study action can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. A character who succeeds on the check knows which switches and dials to manipulate to activate each function below (the alarm that summoned Qaara can't be triggered again). If a character who hasn't succeeded on this check manipulates any switches or dials, roll on the Console Mishaps table to determine what happens.

The console is a Large object with AC 18 and HP 27; the screen above it is a Medium object with AC 11 and HP 4. Both have Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage and Vulnerability to Lightning damage.

The switches and dials on the console govern the following functions:

Activate Loudspeaker. You can utter a short message (up to twenty-five words) that is broadcast in every location throughout Starglass Waypoint.

JUSTINE JONES

The message can be in your own voice or delivered by a mechanical voice that translates your message into Modron.

Create Sensor. You create an invisible sensor in one of the following locations (your choice): the atrium (area S2), fountain court (area S3), merchants' concourse (area S7), Astral gate (area S12), or apartment hallway (area S19). The sensor is situated to provide an unobstructed view of the location, which displays on the glass screen above the console. Things can be seen but not heard through the sensor, which lasts for 10 minutes or until this console function is used again.

Enable Flight. You activate a magical effect. For the next 10 minutes, every creature in Starglass Waypoint gains a Fly Speed equal to its Speed and the ability to hover, but only while inside the outpost. When the effect ends on a creature that has no way to stay aloft, it falls gently and lands safely.

Vent Gas. You vent the gas in the maintenance corridor (area S9), and a deep voice emanating from the console says in Gith, "Gas vented!" The corridor remains clear for the next 24 hours, after which the gas returns.

CONSOLE MISHAPS

1d12	Mishap
1	The console powers down. It can't be turned back on, and none of its functions can be activated henceforth.
2–3	Creatures within 5 feet of the console take 3 (1d6) Lightning damage as sparks erupt from it.
4–6	The sound of a blaring siren fills areas S6 and S18 for 1 minute or until the console is destroyed. All creatures in these locations have the Deafened condition while the siren blares.
7–9	One of the console's functions is triggered accidentally. Roll 1d4 to determine which one: on a **1**, Activate Loudspeaker; on a **2**, Create Sensor (in area S12); on a **3**, Enable Flight; on a **4**, Vent Gas.
10–12	A Hostile **Blue Slaad**, released from an extradimensional space, appears in an unoccupied space as close to the console as possible. It fights any creature it encounters. If this mishap has already happened, roll again.

S19: Apartment Hallway

> This *L*-shaped corridor has an elevator at one end and five other doors leading away from it. Among the crystal sconces mounted on the walls, one near the elevator door appears to be malfunctioning. It flickers erratically.

Touching the flickering sconce extinguishes its light permanently. The other crystal sconces keep the hall bathed in Bright Light.

S20: Privy

This room contains a pair of wooden benches, each one situated above a stone hatch that covers a 2-foot-wide, 30-foot-deep cesspit in the floor. The room holds nothing else of interest.

S21: Pristine Luxury Suite

> This luxury suite consists of two rooms separated by a transparent, sliding glass door.
>
> The west room is decorated like a parlor, complete with padded divans and armchairs, a rolling cart topped with crystal goblets and decanters, and a coat rack. The east room contains a comfortable four-poster bed, a wardrobe, a freestanding mirror, and a claw-footed ceramic bathtub tucked behind a three-panel screen. A window in the east wall looks down on the outpost's concourse.
>
> The walls throughout the suite are inlaid with gold in beautiful geometric patterns.

This suite is unoccupied. The door between areas S21a and S21b, like the other doors in the complex, is made of glassteel (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"); it slides open whenever a creature comes within 1 foot of it. The glassteel window overlooking the merchants' concourse (area S7) doesn't open.

Treasure. Each 5-foot-section of wall contains 100 GP worth of inlaid gold that takes a character 1 hour to pry out. Other valuables include two crystal decanters (worth 250 GP each) and eight crystal goblets (worth 25 GP each).

S22: Luxury Suite Retreat

This two-room suite looks identical to area S21 and has identical treasure. In addition, the west room contains three **Modron Tridrones**, which retreated here to escape the dragon's wrath. The tridrones are Indifferent toward the characters, and each one has its own Glyph Card (see "Starglass Waypoint Features").

The tridrones know Modron and Common Sign Language. Using the latter, they beg the characters to protect them from Ylagan's wrath. Although they don't know the dragon's current location, the modrons share the following information:

Starglass Waypoint Lore. Starglass Waypoint was built by githyanki and modrons. For nearly one hundred years, the githyanki used the outpost as a creche—a secure and isolated location to raise and train their young. A planar gateway deep within the outpost allowed the githyanki to come and go freely from the Astral Plane. Nine years ago, after an earthquake damaged the planar gateway, the githyanki abandoned the outpost but left its modron caretakers behind.

Ylagan's Arrival. When Ylagan arrived a year ago and made the outpost his lair, the modrons set about repurposing it to serve the dragon's needs.

Ylagan's Rage. The dragon keeps his treasure in the room with the planar gate (area S12). Very recently, treasure started disappearing from the dragon's hoard. After failing to locate the thief, Ylagan accused the modrons of stealing his treasure and destroyed several of them in a rage. He then used rubble to seal off the tunnel leading to his hoard and began hunting down the remaining modrons. These tridrones tried and failed to reach the security station (area S18), hoping to use a console there to send a distress signal to a githyanki fortress on the Astral Plane. The dragon blocked the way, so the tridrones retreated to this luxury suite, hoping the dragon takes his remaining treasure and departs the outpost.

S23: Trashed Luxury Suite

> This suite consists of two rooms separated by a sliding glass door. The furnishings in both rooms have been smashed to pieces, covering the floor with splintered wood, torn cloth, shattered crystal and ceramic, and shards of broken mirror. Even the walls, with their gold-inlaid geometric patterns, didn't survive intact; the south wall of the western room has partially collapsed.

The door between areas S23a and S23b is made of glassteel (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"); it slides open whenever a creature comes within 1 foot of it.

A Hostile **Invisible Stalker** dwells in the western room. If the characters enter the suite, the invisible stalker flies toward them, the opening of the sliding glassteel door betraying its presence. The githyanki used bound air elementals to help clean the luxury suites. After the githyanki abandoned Starglass Waypoint, these elementals coalesced into the invisible stalker and became uncontrollable. The stalker fights until destroyed.

Sinkhole. Beyond the collapsed wall lies a naturally formed sinkhole (see area S24).

Treasure. Each 5-foot-section of wall contains 100 GP worth of inlaid gold that takes a character 1 hour to pry out. The suite contains no other valuables.

S24: Robbed Suite and Sinkhole

> This luxury suite consisted of two rooms separated by a sliding glass door. The western room has plunged down a sinkhole, while the eastern room looks like it has been ransacked. The furnishings in the east room include padded divans and armchairs, a meal cart, a coat rack, and a desk with its drawers pulled out. The walls are adorned with engraved geometric patterns.

Close examination of the walls reveals that someone used a knife, chisel, or similar tool to remove the gold inlay from the geometric engravings. Only a few worthless bits of gold remain. A thorough search of the furnishings in the eastern room yields nothing of value and no clues about the robber.

The door between areas S24a and S24b is made of glassteel (see "Starglass Waypoint Features"); it slides open whenever a creature comes within 1 foot of it.

Sinkhole. An earthquake caused a 60-foot-deep sinkhole to form here. Scaling its walls without climbing gear requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

At the bottom of the sinkhole, a **Winged Kobold** named Bobsin has built a makeshift abode out of cloth and broken pieces of wood and ceramic furniture. Bobsin crept into the outpost a week ago, avoided the modrons, and stole a Glyph Card. Using the card, he entered this suite and started looting it. He keeps his treasure inside the makeshift abode and defends it with his life. He is otherwise Friendly toward other creatures.

Characters who know the cause of Ylagan's distress might assume the winged kobold is the thief the dragon seeks. However, Bobsin has never laid eyes on the dragon's treasure hoard (though the greedy winged kobold certainly would like to learn more about it). If the characters deliver the winged kobold to Ylagan for questioning, the dragon interrogates Bobsin and quickly concludes the kobold is a thief—but not the thief he's looking for.

Treasure. Bobsin's collection of treasure consists of the following:

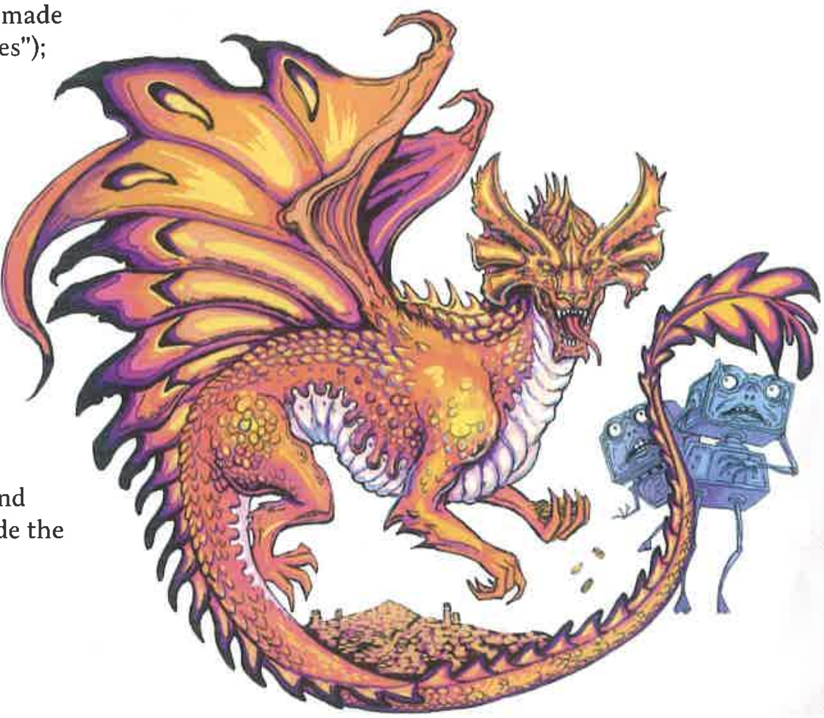
Dagger
Glyph Card (see "Starglass Waypoint Features")
5-pound silver trade bar (worth 25 GP)
22-pound ball of gold inlay (worth 1,100 GP)
Ring of Jumping

Conclusion

Should the characters obtain the *Bag of Devouring*, they eventually discover its true nature. What they do with it at that point is up to them.

If they tell Ylagan that the bag devoured his precious gemstones, the dragon is relieved to learn the truth and regrets his behavior toward the modrons. Contrite, he vows to protect the remaining modrons and watch over them.

Ylagan allows the characters to keep treasure they found in Starglass Waypoint, except items from his personal hoard.

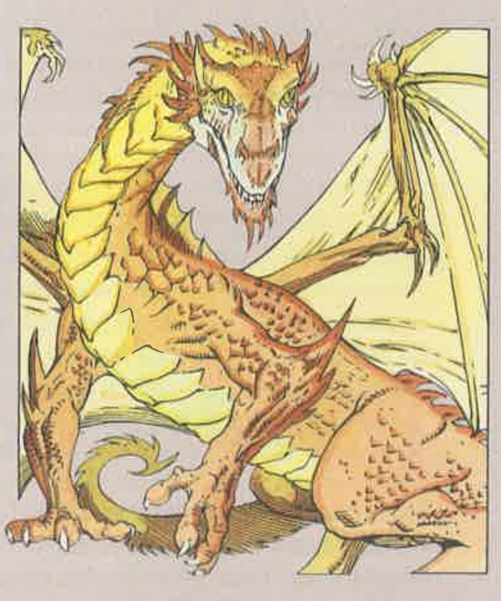


JUSTINE JONES

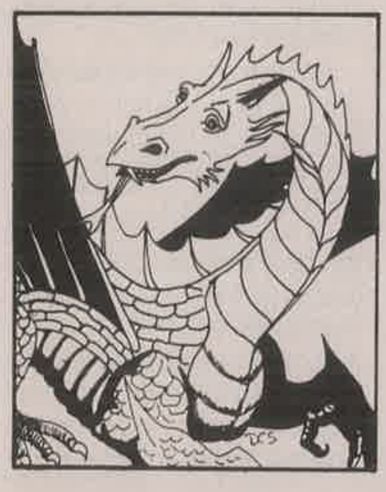
HISTORY OF

BRONZE DRAGONS

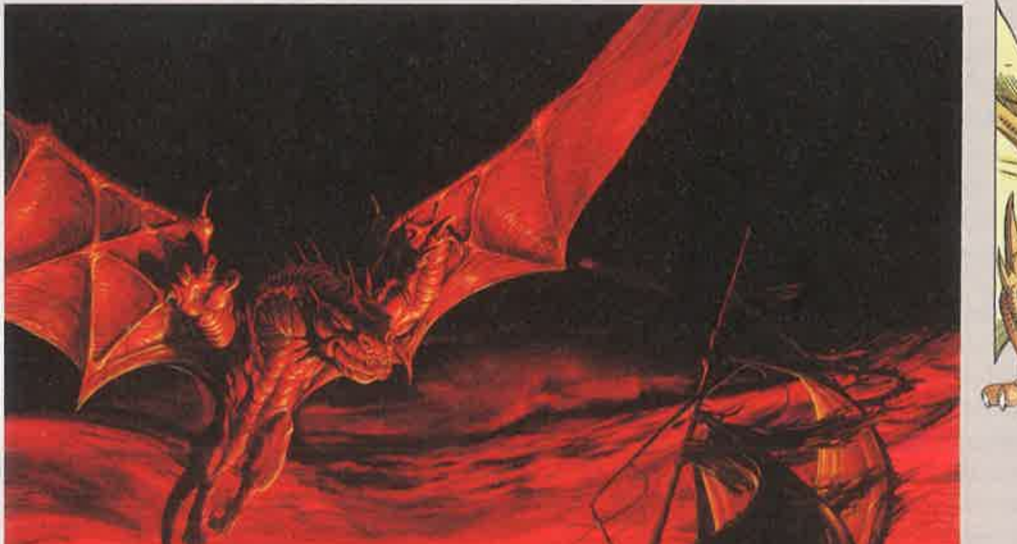
At first glance, the bronze dragon art in the 2025 *Monster Manual* bears little resemblance to the dragon's earliest depictions. But close examination reveals that the small horns and frills on the dragon's head have been there every step of the way.



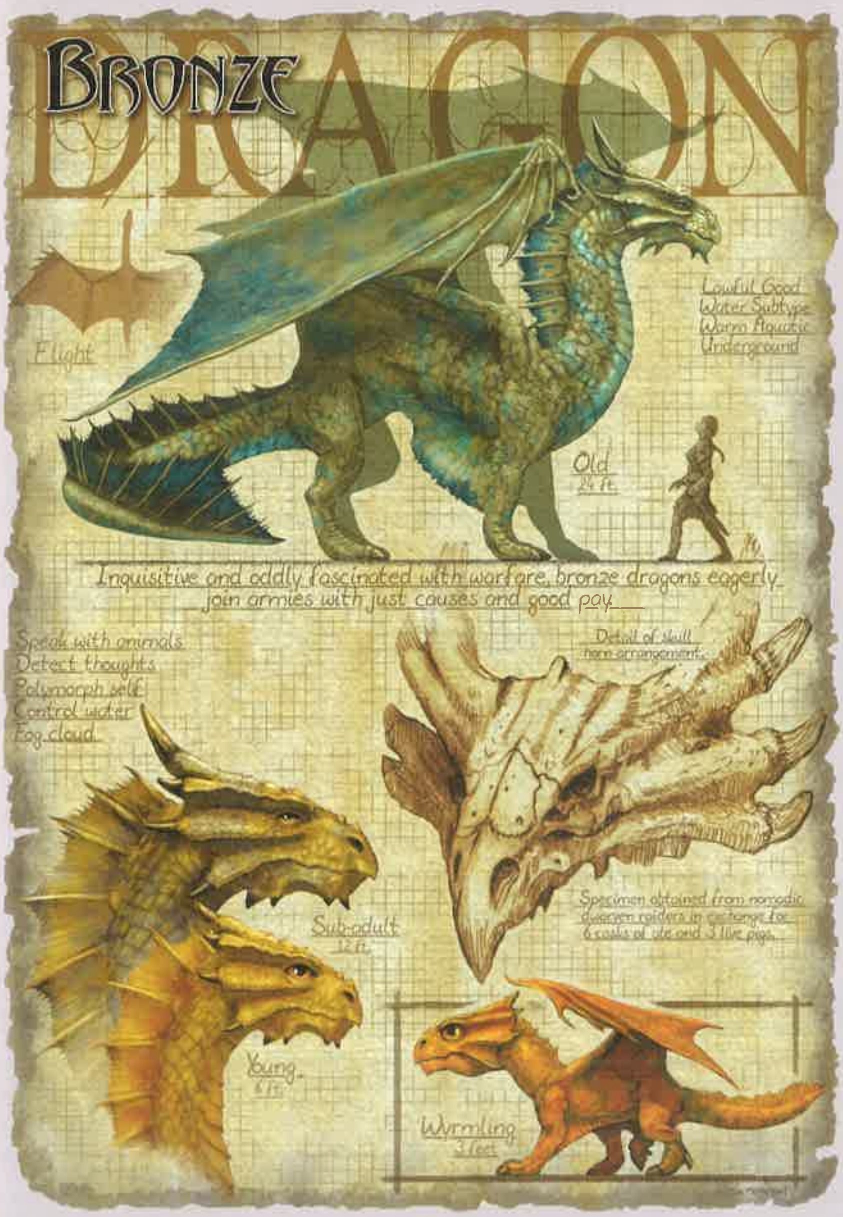
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



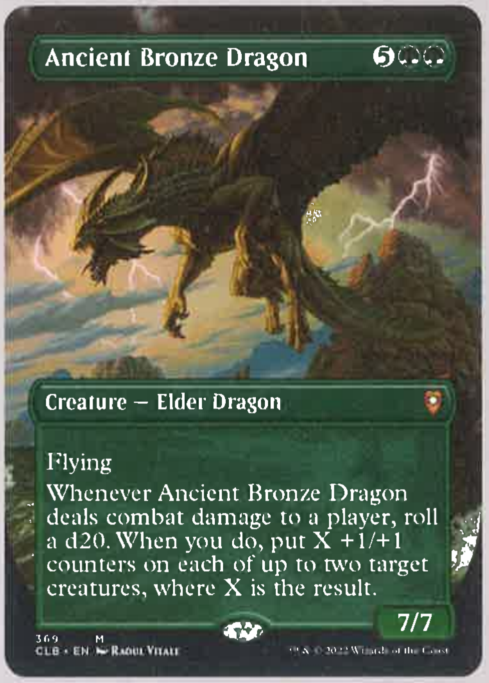
Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland



Dragons of Faith (1986)
Artist: Jeff Easley


BRONZE
DRAGON
Flight
Lawful Good
Water Subtype
Warm Aquatic
Underground
Old
24 ft.
Inquisitive and oddly fascinated with warfare, bronze dragons eagerly join armies with just causes and good pay
Speak with animals
Detect thoughts
Polymorph self
Control water
Fog cloud
Detail of skull horn arrangement.
Specimen obtained from nomadic dwarven raiders in exchange for 6 casks of ale and 3 live pigs.
Sub-adult
12 ft.
Young
6 ft.
Wyrmling
3 feet

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



Ancient Bronze Dragon

Creature — Elder Dragon

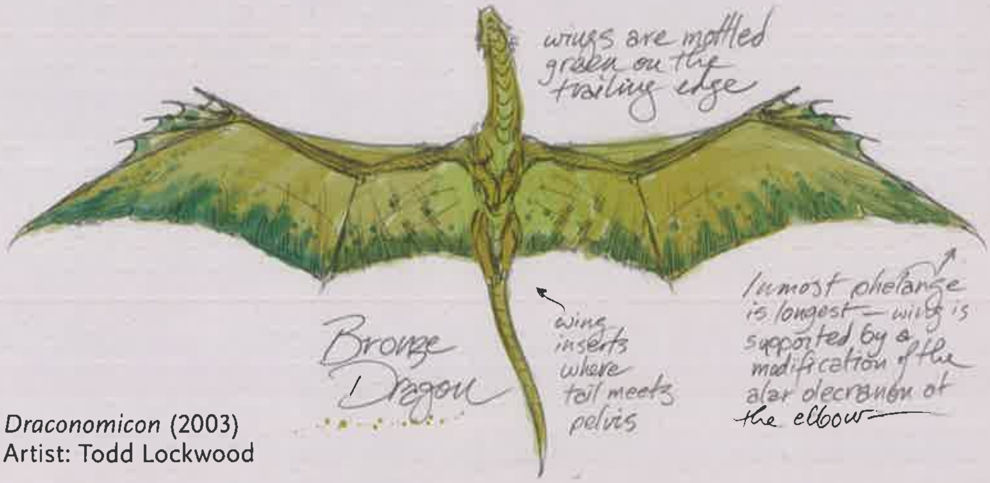
Flying

Whenever Ancient Bronze Dragon deals combat damage to a player, roll a d20. When you do, put X +1/+1 counters on each of up to two target creatures, where X is the result.

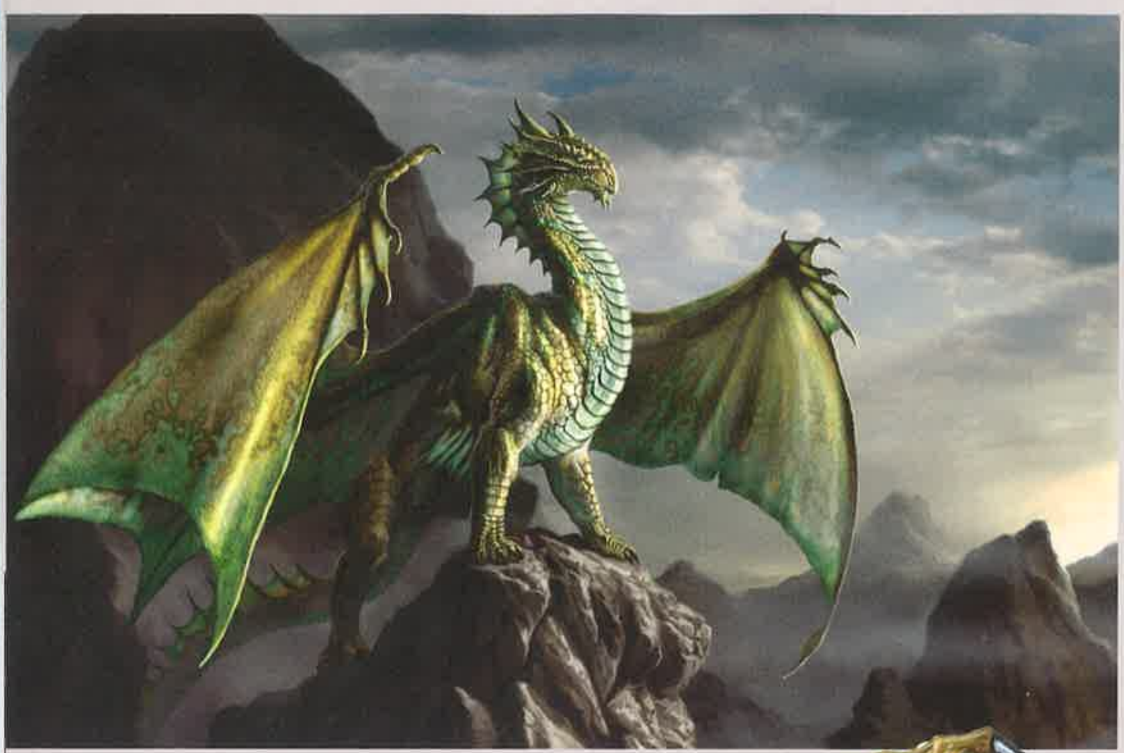
7/7

369 M
CLB • EN Raoul Vitale
™ & © 2022 Wizards of the Coast

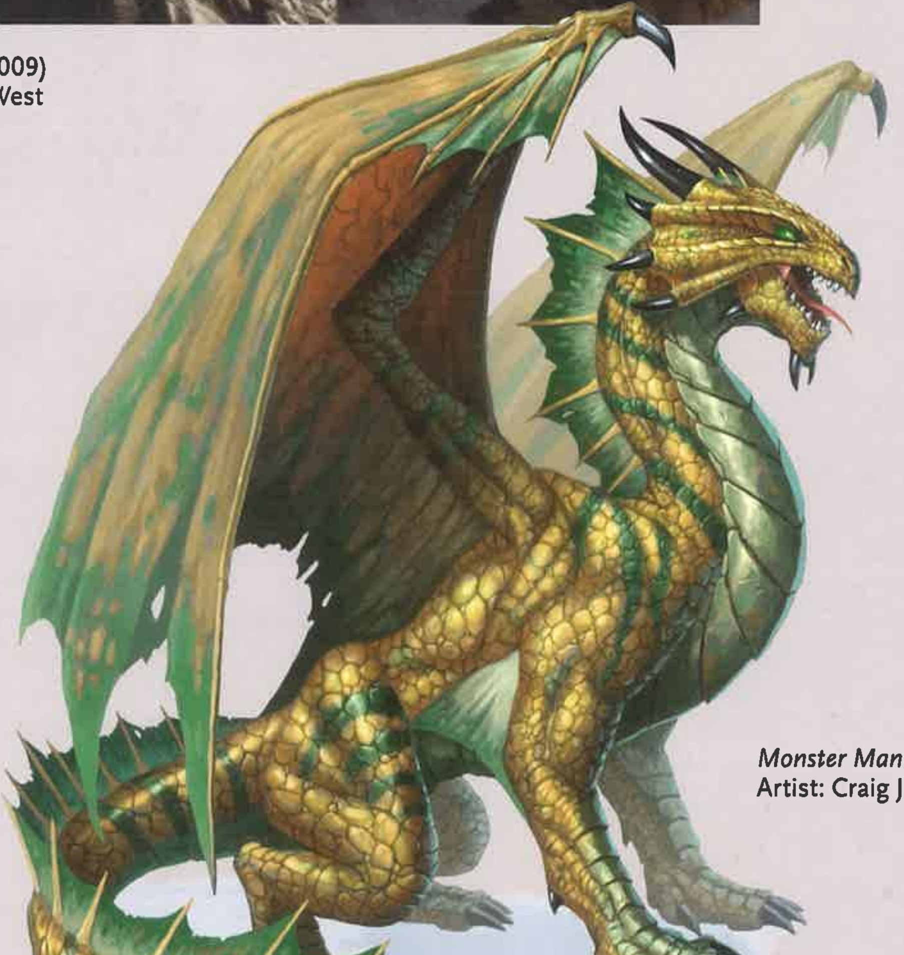
Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate (2022)
Artist: Raoul Vitale


wings are mottled green on the trailing edge
Bronze Dragon
wing inserts where tail meets pelvis
Innmost phelange is longest — wing is supported by a modification of the alar olecranon of the elbow

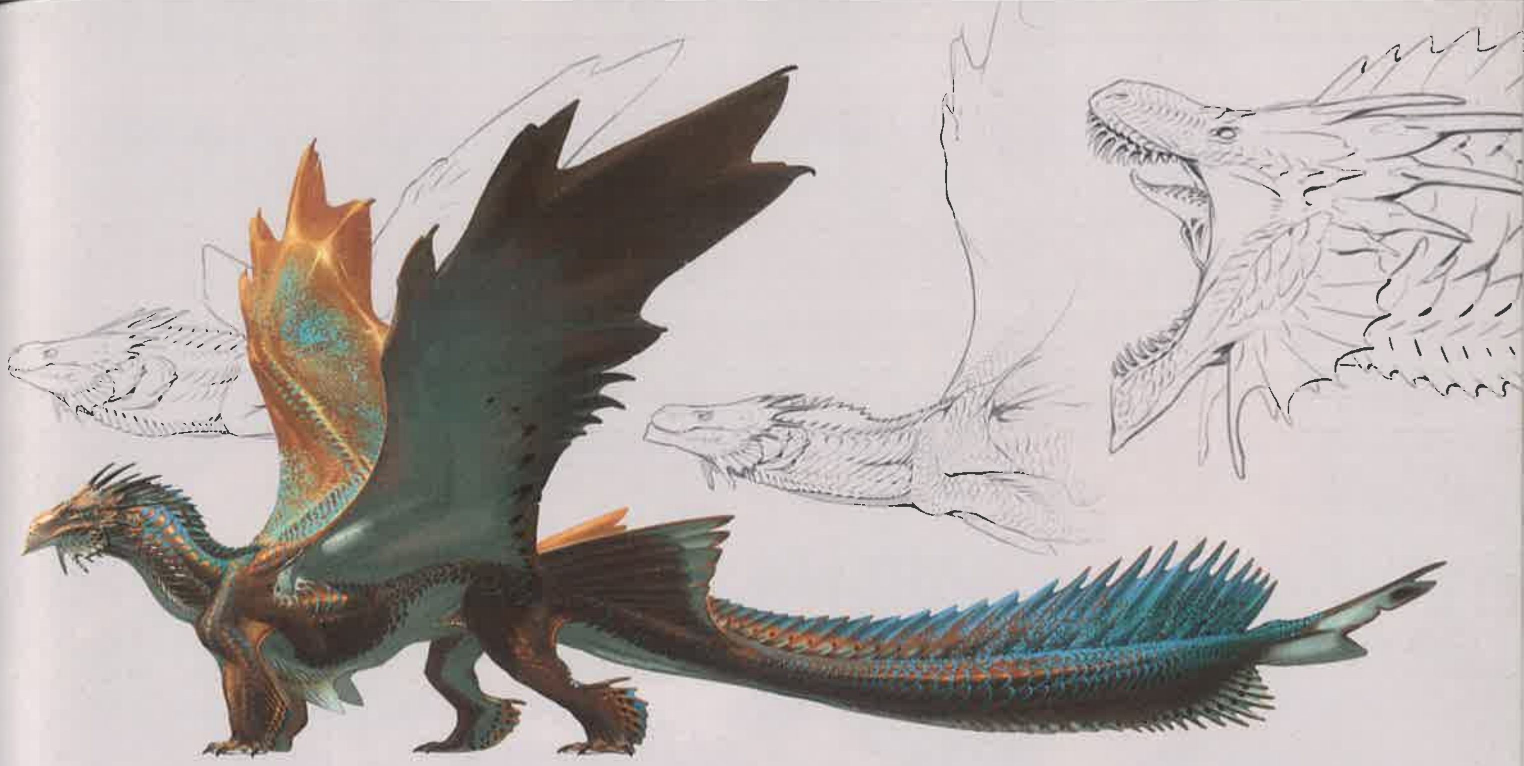
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



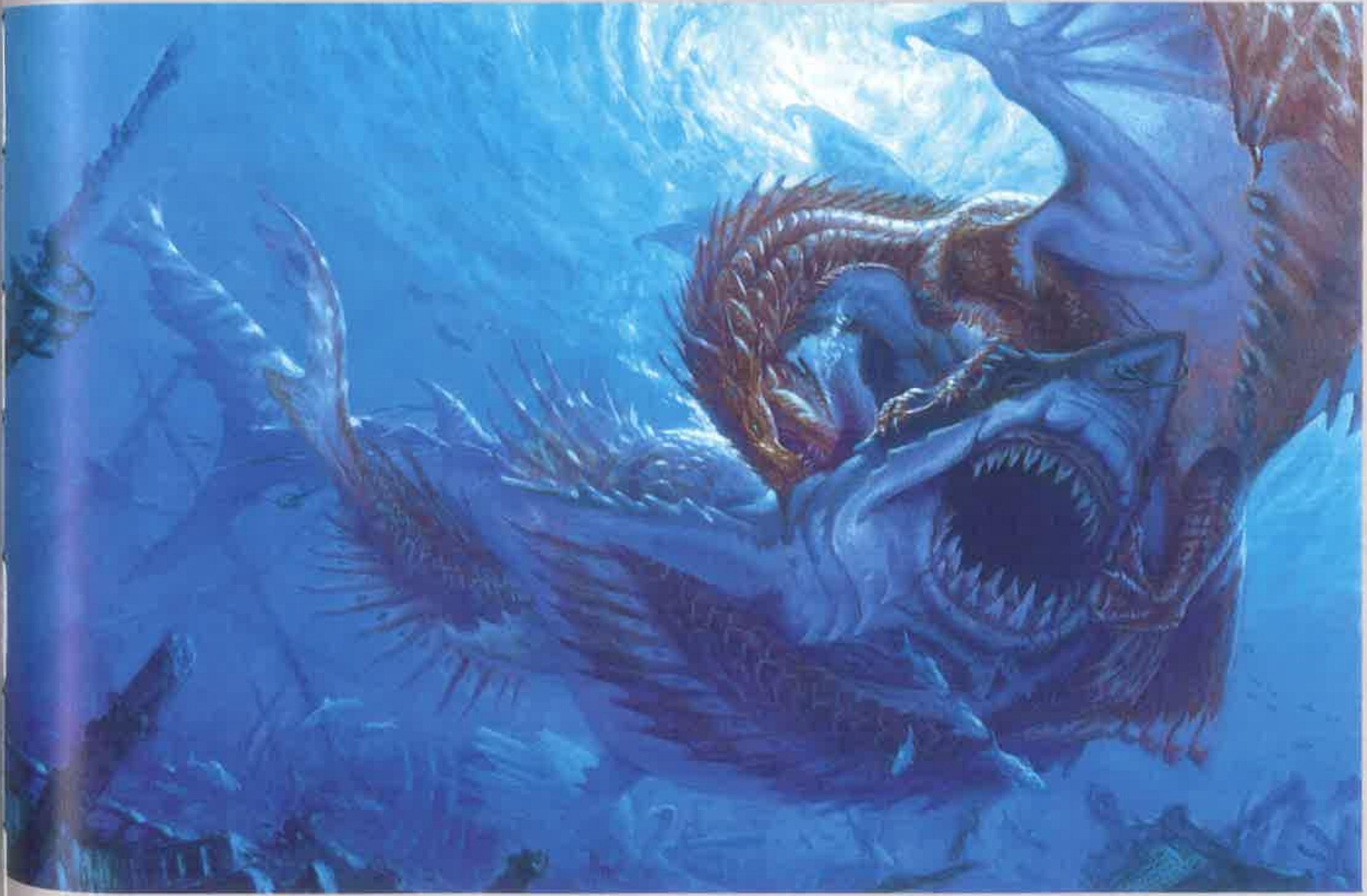
Draconomicon 2 (2009)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Craig J Spearing



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Matt Stewart

CHAPTER 5

The Dragon of Najkir

AN ADVENTURE FOR **Level 7** CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE THERE ARE SMALL ISLANDS.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Dragon's Island. The adventurers are hired to travel by ship to a monastery on the island of Najkir in search of three shipwreck survivors, one of whom is the friend of a friend. The missing person—a priest named Devi—used *Sending Stones* to share that a dragon sank the ship.

Monastery. After the dragon Skalanthas tries to sink the characters' ship, the characters arrive at the monastery. There they encounter friendly monks and find the shipwreck survivors alive and well. These NPCs explain that the dragon has been threatening ships that try to approach or leave the island.

Serpent in the Monastery. Living among the monks is Ronnom Daamos, an assassin who came to Najkir to avoid punishment for his crimes. Ronnom is the son of the knight Skalanthas once served, and the dragon feels beholden to him. The characters must expose Ronnom's crimes so Skalanthas will allow ships to leave the island.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. If you're running it for a single character, read the "Running for One Character" section.

Step 2. Read "Adventure Background" and "The Monks" for more context. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table, which lists individuals the characters will interact with throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Familiarize yourself with the Ship map in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or on D&D Beyond and the game statistics for Sailing Ships and Rowboats in the *Player's Handbook* or on D&D Beyond.

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Assassin
Bronze Dragon, Young
Commoner
Doppelganger
Goat
Noble
Oni
Priest
Scout

KEY NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Anish	Aasimar monastery leader	**Commoner** (Medium, Lawful Neutral)	M15–17
Ashlyn Maranta	Elf shipwreck survivor	**Scout** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	M11a
Devi Talzar	Human shipwreck survivor	**Priest** (Medium, Neutral Good)	M11b
Eko and Mok	Ronnom's shape-shifted bodyguards	**Doppelganger**	M25
Kranine Orso	Tiefling captain of characters' ship	**Noble** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"
Mirel Astafar	Human friend and quest giver	**Noble** (Medium, Neutral Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"
Ronnom Daamos	Fugitive human assassin	**Assassin** (Medium, Neutral Evil)	M26
Skalanthas	Protector of the island	**Young Bronze Dragon**	M38
Treef Lameer	Human shipwreck survivor	**Noble** (Medium, Chaotic Neutral)	M11c
Veen	Ronnom's friend	**Oni**	M26

JOSHUA RAPHAEL

Running for One Character

You can run this adventure for a single character of level 7. Ideally, that character should have proficiency in at least two of the following skills:

- Acrobatics
- Athletics
- Investigation
- Medicine
- Perception
- Religion

The solo character gains the *Blessing of the Lone Champion* (see this book's introduction) to compensate for the lack of companions.

Adventure Background

The bronze dragon Skalanthas was raised by House Daamos, a human noble family. When he was a wyrmling, a valorous human knight named Ishyllia Daamos trained him to fight by her side. After he grew, Skalanthas served as her mount. When Ishyllia died in battle fifteen years ago, the distraught Skalanthas fled House Daamos in his grief.

Skalanthas found solace at a monastery on the island of Najkir, where Ishyllia once liked to go to escape the politics and violence of her homeland. There, Skalanthas struck up a friendship with the monks that has lasted for years. The dragon laid claim to a cave complex under the monastery and plundered treasure-laden shipwrecks amid the island's vast coral reefs. The monks felt grateful for the dragon's company and protection.

Six months ago, a ship delivered Ronnom Daamos—Ishyllia Daamos's son—to the monastery. Ronnom had grown up listening to his mother's stories about Najkir and told the monks he needed to hide from his family's enemies. The monks offered to shelter him and his bodyguards as long as they needed it. Ronnom was delighted to learn that Skalanthas, his mother's long-lost dragon companion, also lived on the island. It didn't take long for Ronnom to become the dragon's friend and confidant.

A Sordid Past

Neither Skalanthas nor the monks know that until recently, Ronnom led an assassins' guild that carried out political killings for profit. Rival factions banded together to destroy the guild, killing most of the guild's assassins, but Ronnom and his bodyguards escaped and fled to Najkir.

Under Ronnom's influence, Skalanthas has grown territorial, threatening ships that get too close to the island. Six days ago, Skalanthas sank a ship that sailed too close to Najkir for the dragon's comfort. Three survivors swam ashore and followed a trail to the monastery.

The monks fed and sheltered the survivors. One survivor saw Ronnom, recognized him as a wanted criminal, and told the others. A monk witnessed the conversation and told Anish, the monastery's hierarch. Hierarch Anish met with Ronnom privately and asked him to leave Najkir peacefully. Ronnom refused.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins on a large island named Rakfir in a seaside tavern called the Smiling Fish. The characters are meeting with their longtime friend Mirel Astafar, a well-dressed, wealthy human merchant (Medium, Neutral Good **Noble**).

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to begin the adventure:

> You arrive at the Smiling Fish to find Mirel Astafar ensconced in a booth, a hearty meal of grilled fish and wine on the table before her. After you exchange pleasantries and dig in to the meal, a serious look settles upon Mirel's face.
>
> "I need your help to bring my friend Devi home," Mirel says. "Devi is a priest who serves a god of the stars and wanderers. She was traveling by ship when a bronze-scaled dragon sank the vessel with its lightning breath. Most of the crew went down with the ship, but Devi and two sailors survived by swimming to a nearby island inhabited mostly by wild goats and sheep. Devi then used our *Sending Stones* to tell me what happened.
>
> "I own a ship called the *Wavemount*. I'll pay you 2,000 Gold Pieces to ensure Devi's safe return plus another 250 Gold Pieces for the safe return of each sailor. I believe they're all on the island of Najkir, based on Devi's description. My ship can get you there in three days.
>
> "Will you help?"

If the characters refuse the quest, Mirel sweetens the reward by offering them free passage on any of her ships whenever it suits them. If that's still not enough, she gives them a silver necklace with a jade pendant (worth 250 GP) as an advance.

Once the characters accept the quest, they can leave at once for Najkir. Before they depart, Mirel gives them additional information that Devi just imparted to her via the *Sending Stones*:

> "Devi and the others found a monastery hidden in a sea cave on the south side of the island," Mirel says. "The monks there seem friendly, but the sea cave is also home to the bronze dragon that sank Devi's ship. The monks apologized for the dragon, claiming it was only defending its territory. I've told Devi that a rescue party is on the way, and she's anxious to meet you.
>
> "I've entrusted a chest of gold coins to Captain Orso of the *Wavemount*. If the dragon threatens your ship, I've ordered the captain to bribe the dragon for safe passage to and from the island."

The *Wavemount* is a Sailing Ship with a tiefling captain named Kranine Orso (Medium, Chaotic Good **Noble**) and a crew of nineteen Chaotic Good sailors of various species (**Commoners**). Captain Orso and her crew are all Friendly toward the characters.

A latched, unlocked trunk stored in the captain's cabin contains 1,000 GP, which Captain Orso is authorized to use to bribe the dragon if it threatens the ship. The trunk and its contents weigh 45 pounds.

When the characters are ready to get underway, the *Wavemount* sets sail for Najkir.

Skalanthas Strikes!

The voyage to Najkir is uneventful until the ship comes within a mile of the island. When that happens, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> The sea is calm; the sky is clear. Captain Orso hands you a spyglass, which reveals the white cliffs of a small island half-shrouded by fog.
>
> "Najkir, dead ahead!" shouts a crew member.
>
> Suddenly, a dragon the size of a grizzly bear erupts from the water on the starboard side of the ship and takes to the sky. Its bronze scales gleam in the sunlight. With great flaps of its wings, it continues its ascent.

The **Young Bronze Dragon** is Skalanthas. He was scouring old shipwrecks when he saw the *Wavemount* from beneath the sea. Skalanthas no longer permits strange ships to venture this close to his island, and he is Hostile, uncommunicative, and unwilling to accept bribes.

Running the Encounter

Have Skalanthas, the characters, and Captain Orso roll Initiative. The crew acts immediately after Captain Orso in the Initiative order. These sailors take the Hide action while Orso tries to bribe the dragon—to no avail.

Use the Ship map in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to represent the *Wavemount*. Stored in the ship's cargo hold are two Rowboats. See the *Player's Handbook* for Sailing Ship and Rowboat game statistics.

Skalanthas is 80 feet above the ship at the start of the encounter. He swoops to within 30 feet of the ship and uses his Repulsion Breath to push the ship's crew and passengers into the ocean. If he lacks clear targets for his Repulsion Breath, Skalanthas seeks to damage the ship; he avoids harming creatures whenever possible. Skalanthas continues his assault until he is Bloodied or the ship is destroyed, at which point he dives underwater and swims back to his lair on the island (area M38).

Fate of the Wavemount

The encounter ends with the *Wavemount* surviving or sinking, as described below.

The Ship Is Saved. If Skalanthas fails to sink the *Wavemount*, Captain Orso gives the characters a Rowboat they can use to reach the island. Meanwhile, she maneuvers her ship into a fog bank and hides there until they return.

As an Influence action, a character can try to convince Captain Orso to part with the coin-filled trunk by making a DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. On a success, Orso reluctantly hands it over, hoping it will aid in the characters' next encounter with the dragon.

The Ship Is Sunk. If the *Wavemount* is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it sinks. Captain Orso abandons the coin-filled trunk as she and her sailors cling to pieces of flotsam and paddle toward the island. The characters can do the same.

Deprived of their ship, Captain Orso and her sailors aren't eager to face the dragon again, so they head to the monastery with the characters.

Najkir Monastery

The island Najkir is a rugged, egg-shaped island 6 miles wide and 10 miles long. Persistent fog shrouds much of the island, which has a black pebble beach to the north and white cliffs to the south. The island has a large population of goats and sheep, and the surrounding reefs are home to plenty of fish.

The only permanent structure on the island is the Najkir Monastery, which is tucked inside a sea cave on the south side of the island. A worn path hugs the cliffside, descending from the top of the cliff to a few feet above sea level before entering the cave and climbing to the monastery's entrance. A pier allows small boats to dock near the entrance.

The monastery has long been a retreat for folk seeking enlightenment. The monks who reside here are peaceful.

The Monks

Thirteen monks of various species dwell in the Najkir Monastery, including Hierarch Anish, who is an aasimar. All monks are Lawful Neutral **Commoners** and Friendly toward visitors. They wear wool robes and wooden clogs.

Monk Names

If you need a name for a monk, make one up or choose a name from the following list:

1d12	Name	1d12	Name
1	Avishal	7	Jeneira
2	Beltumil	8	Lukai
3	Cayem	9	Nezlen
4	Fenlah	10	Penth
5	Garu	11	Symus
6	Huett	12	Vaara

Survivors of the Naiad

When the *Naiad* sank, two sailors and a priest sought refuge at the monastery. The priest is Devi Talzar; the sailors are Ashlyn Maranta and Treef Lameer. Between meals, they rest in guest cells (area M11).

What the Residents Know

Characters who strike up a conversation with any of the monastery's residents can learn what they know about the following topics.

Dead Falcons. The monks use trained falcons to communicate with the outside world. Shortly before the characters' arrival, someone killed all the falcons by feeding them poisoned meat.

Getting off the Island. The monks have a small boat they use for fishing, but it's not a practical seagoing vessel. There are no other ships (or settlements) on the island.

Leader. The monks' leader is Hierarch Anish, an older aasimar man with a gentle disposition.

Monastery. The Najkir Monastery has long served as a retreat for monks and visitors seeking enlightenment. Visitors may freely explore the monastery but are urged not to enter the flooded caves on the lower level (see "Skalanthas the Dragon" below).

Ronnom Daamos. Ronnom, a noble, arrived by ship six months ago with his three bodyguards, whom the monks know as the brothers Eko and Mok and a woman named Veen. Ronnom is the son of Ishyllia Daamos, a knight who was a frequent guest at the monastery before her death. Recently it has come to light that Ronnom is a wanted man whose crimes include numerous assassinations. The monks have no interest in politics and no wish to harbor assassins, but Ronnom refuses to leave. He and his bodyguards have private quarters on the lower level.

Shipwreck Survivors. Six days ago, Skalanthas sank a ship called the *Naiad* that sailed close to the island. Three survivors swam ashore and found the monastery. The monks are happy to give them food, drink, and shelter until rescuers arrive.

Skalanthas the Dragon. The bronze dragon Skalanthas came to Najkir fifteen years ago, after the death of his adoptive human mother—a knight named Ishyllia Daamos. Skalanthas lives in the sea caves below the monastery and feeds on fish, goats, and sheep. In the past six months, Skalanthas has become increasingly territorial, threatening and sinking ships that approach the island. The monks began noticing Skalanthas's change in demeanor shortly after Ronnom's arrival.

Monastery Features

The Najkir Monastery is hewn out of solid rock, its walls carved to resemble bricks, and its floor carved to resemble tiles. Because the monks encourage inhabitants to focus on inner peace rather than outer beauty, the monastery's construction is simple and its interior decoration sparse. Other features are described below unless otherwise noted.

Caves

Natural caves vary in height and water depth; see their descriptions (M2–M3, M32–M34, and M37–M39) for more information. In flooded caves, the murky water limits visibility to 20 feet. The tides' effect on water depth is negligible.

Ceilings

All corridors in the monastery are 10 feet high with arched ceilings. Rooms on the upper floor have 15-foot vaulted ceilings; rooms on the lower floor have flat, 10-foot ceilings.

Doors

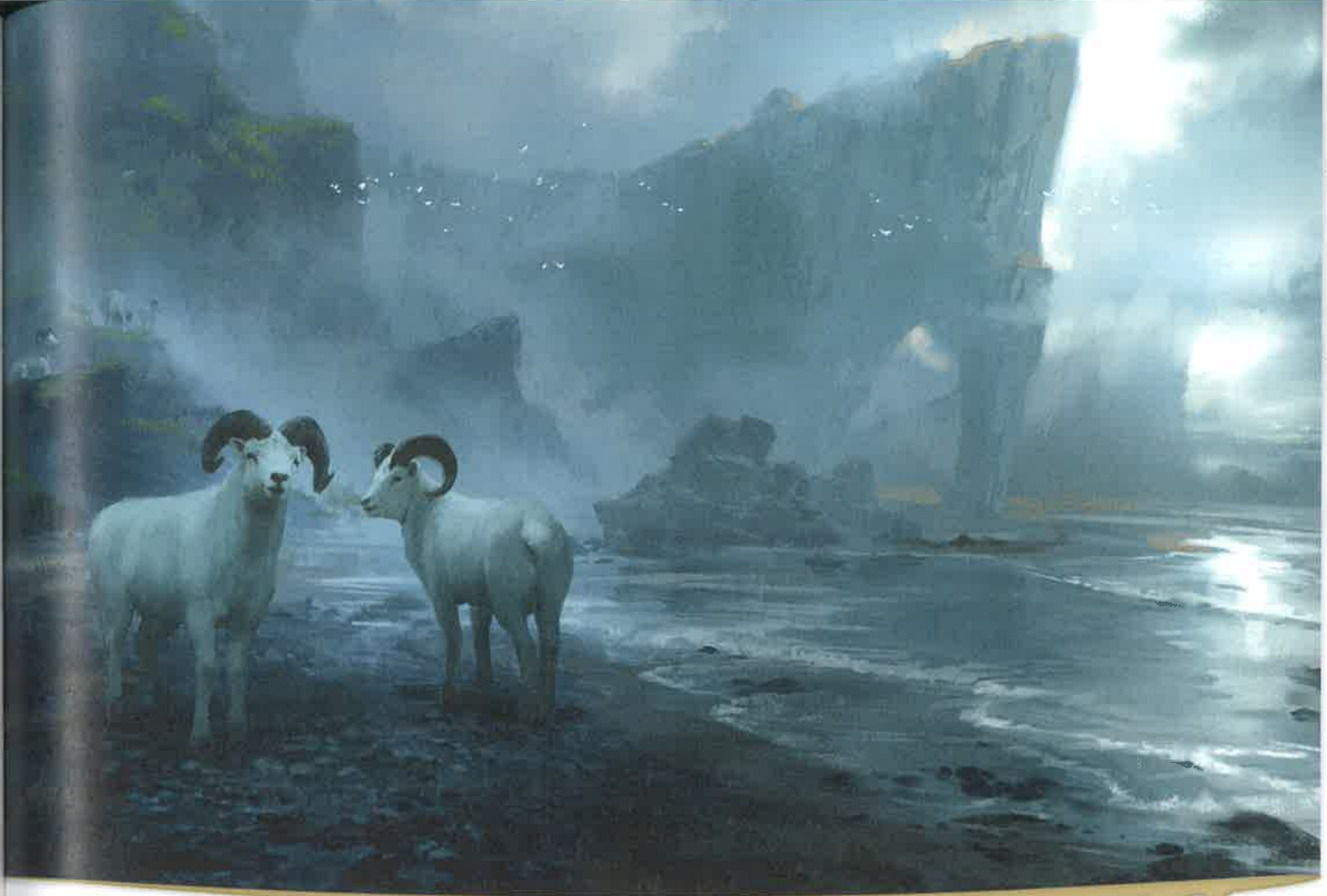
Most doors are made of wood with iron handles and hinges.

Lighting

Hooded Lanterns hanging from the ceiling by iron chains cast Bright Light in interior rooms. Sunlight entering the cave mouth during the day casts Dim Light through cave areas in the upper level. Caves in the lower level are in Darkness; descriptions assume the characters have a way of seeing in the dark.

Windows

Some western rooms on the monastery's upper level (areas M5–M6 and M8–M9) have narrow stained-glass windows that a character can swing open from the inside. These windows can't be opened



THE ISLAND NAJKIR

JOSHUA RAPHAEL

from the outside but break easily (AC 11, HP 2, Vulnerability to Bludgeoning damage, Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage). A character can easily climb through an open window.

Upper Level Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 5.1.

M1: Cliffside Walkway

This stone path extends from the top of a 100-foot-high cliff southeast of the area shown on the map to the mouth of a sea cave (area M2), ending at the monastery's entrance (area M4). **Goats** often wander the walkway.

M2: Sea Cave

> Seawater flows through this cave. A walkway along its southeast wall leads to the entry of a building carved into the stone. Along the west wall sit two barren, rocky ledges.
>
> Further back, a rowboat is tied up to a dock. The dock is attached to the building carved into the cave's east wall. The building's stained-glass windows overlook the dock and the cave mouth.

The water in this cave is 20 feet deep. The uneven ceiling rises roughly 30 feet above water level.

The dock and Rowboat are described in area M3. The monastery's entrance is described in area M4.

Ledges. Along the west wall are two rocky ledges with nothing on them. The northern ledge is 10 feet above the water, and the southern ledge a more accessible 5 feet above it.

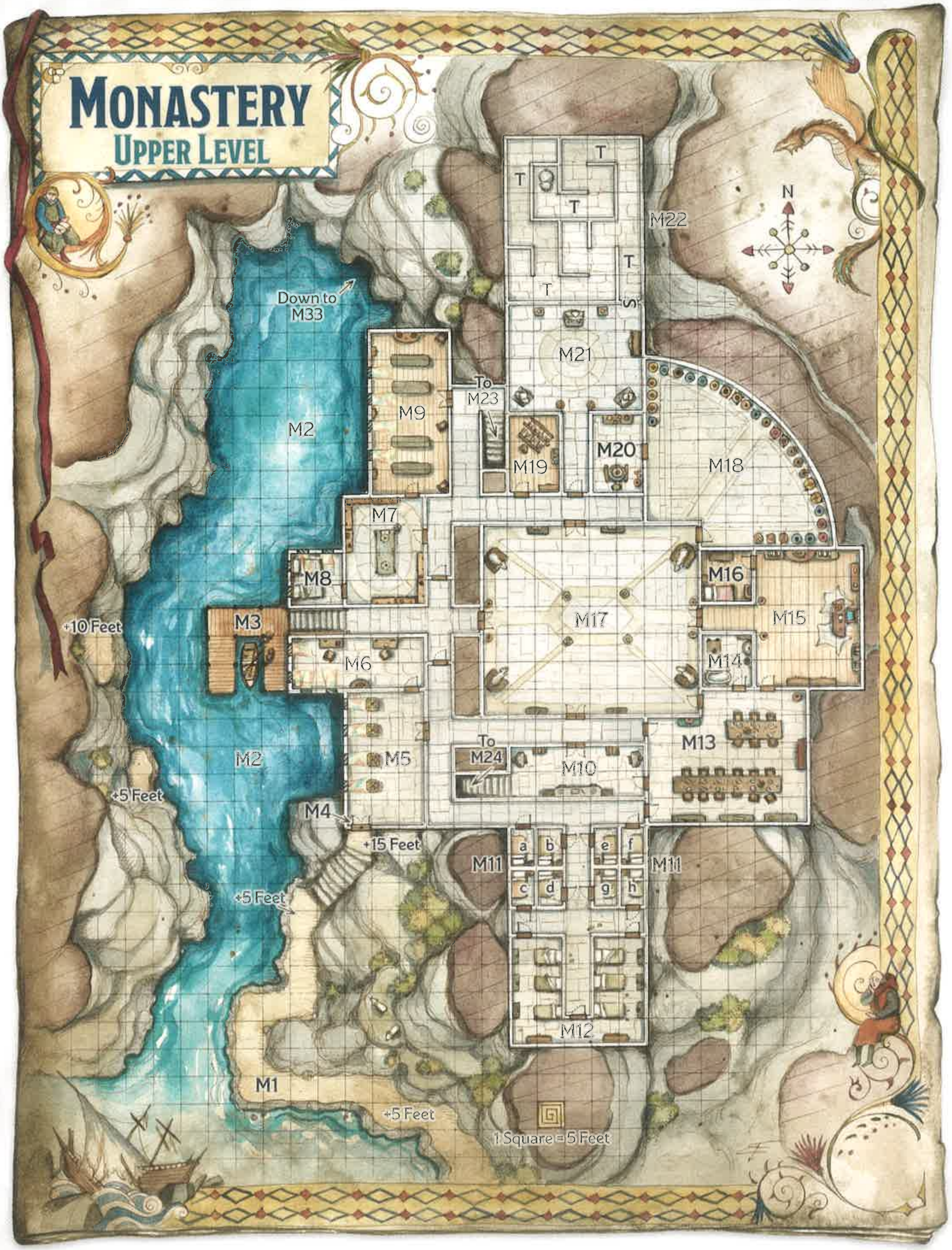
Underwater Tunnel. At the north end of the cave is a completely submerged, 10-foot-diameter tunnel blocked by boulders (see area M33 for details).

M3: Dock

Stone posts support this wooden dock from below (see area M32). Tied to the dock is a Rowboat, which the monks primarily use for fishing. The boat's oars are kept in the storeroom (area M27). East of the dock, a stone staircase ascends to a cross-shaped hallway with three doors at the opposite end.

M4: Barred Entrance

If the characters approach the monastery via the walkway (area M1), describe the entrance as follows:


MONASTERY
UPPER LEVEL
N
T
T
T
T
T
T
S
M22
Down to M33
M21
To M23
M9
M2
M19
M20
M18
M7
M8
M16
M3
M17
M15
+10 Feet
M6
M14
M13
To M24
M2
M5
M10
+5 Feet
M4
+15 Feet
a
b
e
f
M11
M11
c
d
g
h
+5 Feet
M12
M1
+5 Feet
1 Square = 5 Feet

Map 5.1: Monastery Upper Level

> The walkway leads to a rough-hewn staircase that climbs to an alcove. At the back of the alcove stands an oak door set with an iron knocker shaped like a sheep's head. The door's stone frame is decorated with carvings of flowers and small birds. Engraved above the door are the words "Enter in Peace" in Common.

Close inspection of the door reveals a tiny peephole situated above the knocker (for tall monks) and another one situated below the knocker (for short monks). The door is barred from the inside. The size and weight of the door raises the DC to force it open to 20.

Monk's Welcome. If one or more characters bang on the door, use the knocker, or otherwise signal their arrival, a human monk arrives within a minute, peers through one of the peepholes, unbars the door, and welcomes the new arrivals. The monk leads them to a large hall (area M17), where Hierarch Anish is engaged in discussions with others of the order.

M5: Aviary

> Four stone pedestals, each one three feet tall, stand in a row near four narrow stained-glass windows showing pastoral scenes. Situated atop each pedestal is a large birdcage. A dwarf monk on a stepladder is cleaning out one of the cages.

Each birdcage weighs 20 pounds. The first time the characters visit the aviary, the monk is removing the remains of dead falcons from the cages and depositing them in a basket on the floor. A character who takes a Search action and examines the falcons can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a success, the character ascertains that the falcons died after ingesting some kind of poison within the past 12 hours.

The monk can confirm that the birds were well yesterday. He believes they died from eating poisoned meat but doesn't know who fed it to them. He explains that these falcons were trained to deliver messages to and from the monastery. (Ronnom fed the birds poisoned meat to stop the monks from communicating the secret of his identity to the outside world.)

The monk then suggests the characters speak immediately with the head of his order, Hierarch Anish. If they're not accompanied by another monk, he leads them to a large hall (area M17), where Anish is consulting with the rest of the monks.

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M6: Scriptorium

> This long, narrow room has four stained-glass windows depicting pastoral scenes and two writing desks with wooden chairs.

The monks communicate with the outside world by writing letters and using trained falcons (see area M5) to deliver them to faraway cities. The letters are written using the supplies stored in the desks.

Characters who search the desks' drawers find four wooden scroll tubes (each small enough to be tied to a falcon's leg), two sets of Calligrapher's Supplies, and two Candles.

M7: Hospital

> This room is furnished with a wooden operating table positioned below two hanging lanterns. Stone shelves along the walls hold bandages, clean sheets, and other medical supplies.

Characters who examine the contents of the room find the following items:

Ten Blankets
Ten empty Glass Bottles
Twelve Healer's Kits
Two Hooded Lanterns (hanging above the table)
One jar of *Keoghtom's Ointment*

M8: Recovery Room

> Two neatly made beds crowd this ten-foot-square room. Four stained-glass windows depicting grazing goats let in dim light in dappled patterns of green, blue, and yellow.

The sick and the wounded come here to rest and recuperate. Under each bed sits an empty chamber pot.

M9: Library

> Freestanding bookcases form neat rows in this room. Narrow stained-glass windows depicting pastoral scenes line one wall. A well-used broom leans between two of the windows.

The broom is nonmagical.

Books. Hundreds of nonmagical books are stored here and organized by topic. A character who spends 8 hours conducting research in this library gains Advantage on ability checks tied to one skill—History, Medicine, or Nature—for the next 24 hours.

Spellbook. Any character who spends at least 10 minutes examining the books in this library finds an old Spellbook that belonged to a dwarf magic-user named Xantarn, who died in the monastery eight years ago. The book contains the following spells: *Arcane Lock*, *Color Spray*, *Counterspell*, *Darkvision*, *Detect Magic*, *Feather Fall*, *Invisibility*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Melf's Acid Arrow*, *Phantasmal Force*, *Sending*, *Speak with Dead*, *Unseen Servant*, and *Vampiric Touch*.

M10: Kitchen

> Two iron stoves sit at opposite ends of this narrow, cluttered kitchen. Next to the western stove, a staircase descends.
>
> Two monks are hard at work preparing a meal.

The two human monks (Medium **Commoners**) pay little heed to visitors as they prepare batches of fish stew.

Characters who loot the kitchen can gather enough supplies to create two sets of Cook's Utensils.

M11: Guest Quarters

These cells, set aside for visitors, each contain a wooden bed, a chamber pot, and hooks on the walls for hanging clothes. Under each bed is a shelf for storing personal effects.

The survivors from the *Naiad* are resting in three cells: Ashlyn in M11a, Devi in M11b, and Treef in M11c. Each survivor is described further below.

The remaining cells are unoccupied, unless the characters or any *Wavemount* crew are staying at the monastery. If they are, the characters and crew share the remaining cells as the players see fit.

Ashlyn Maranta. Ashlyn is an elf (Medium, Chaotic Good **Scout**) with pale blue skin who can breathe both air and water. She was close to the *Naiad*'s late captain, a human named Jeressa Lameer. When the *Naiad* sank, Ashlyn helped Devi and Treef swim to Najkir. She is brave but saddened by the loss of her captain and other shipmates.

Devi Talzar. Devi is a middle-aged human (Medium, Neutral Good **Priest**) with a kind face who serves a god of the stars and wanderers. Devi carries a *Sending Stone*, which she uses to communicate with her good friend Mirel Astafar. Devi is cautious, patient, and brave but doesn't take unnecessary risks.

Treef Lameer. Treef is a fifteen-year-old human (Medium, Chaotic Neutral **Noble**) born into a privileged and politically powerful family. He is also the nephew of the *Naiad*'s late captain, Jeressa Lameer. He recognized Ronnom Daamos at once. Although he hopes for rescue, Treef thinks Ronnom ordered the dragon to sink the *Naiad* and wants revenge. He won't leave the monastery until Ronnom is, as he says, "properly dealt with."

M12: Monks' Dormitory

This room has east and west wings. Each wing contains three bunk beds (so there are twelve beds in all), three trunks for personal storage, and a cabinet holding towels and clean linens.

At night, all the monks except Hierarch Anish sleep here.

M13: Dining Hall

> This dining hall contains two long wooden tables. Eighteen chairs are arranged around the tables, which have dishes, utensils, and goblets neatly arrayed atop them. Three sideboards are lined up against the south wall, and a tall cabinet stands by the east wall. A basin near the northwest doors holds fresh water, and a bust of a bearded man rests on a pedestal in the northeast corner. Lit lanterns hang above the tables.

The monks gather here twice per day—once for breakfast at sunrise and once for dinner at sunset. Guests are welcome to join them as space allows. Hierarch Anish never dines here and instead receives his meals in his office (area M15).

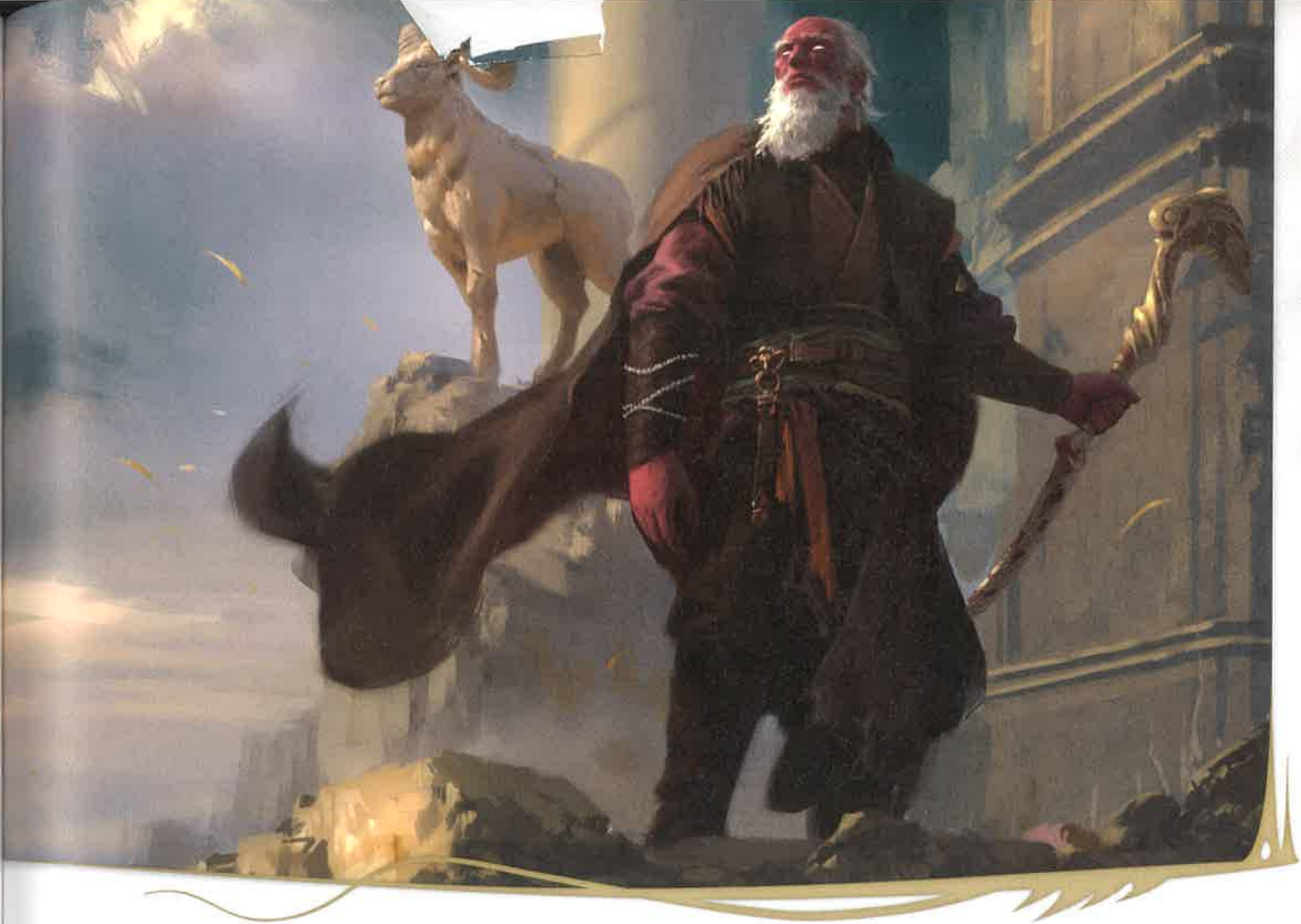
M14: Privy and Bathroom

> This ten-foot-square room features a couple of benches with buckets beneath them and a wooden trapdoor in the floor. A bathtub sits in the corner.

Below the trapdoor, a shallow trench carries waste away from the monastery.

M15: Hierarch's Office

> This airy room contains a desk and high-backed chair situated in front of a carving that spans the entire east wall. The carving depicts a family of goats climbing a majestic, windswept cliff. Books and knickknacks adorn shelves and cabinets around the walls.



When he's not elsewhere, Hierarch Anish (Medium, Lawful Neutral **Commoner**) oversees the affairs of the monastery from this office.

Desk. Characters who search the desk's drawers find the following items:

Two Candles
One bottle of Ink
One Ink Pen
Ten sheets of Parchment

Wall Carving. The carving on the eastern wall is symbolic: the goats represent unity of purpose, and their steady climb represents the spiritual journey one must take to achieve enlightenment and the heights of tranquility. A character who examines the carving and takes a Study action can make a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check. On a success, the character recognizes its meaning.

M16: Hierarch's Quarters

The hierarch's bedroom is private but no fancier than the other monks' quarters. It contains a short, neatly made bed, a nightstand, a chest of drawers with a washbasin, and a tall cabinet holding a few spare garments.

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M17: Meeting and Meditation Hall

> Four life-size goat statues perch atop stone pedestals in this room's corners. The goats' bearded faces convey wisdom and calm.
>
> Twelve figures wearing wool robes and wooden clogs are gathered here. Your arrival interrupts their quiet yet intense conversation. The monks—an orc, an elf, a dwarf, a dragonborn, a tiefling, and some humans—turn toward you with looks of mild surprise. The monk in the center, an older aasimar, leans on a snake-headed cane and says, "Enter in peace, friends."

The aasimar is Hierarch Anish (see M15). He and eleven monks (a mix of Small and Medium **Commoners**) are gathered here to discuss what to do about Ronnom Daamos and his bodyguards. Anish's cane is a *Staff of the Python.*

If the characters were led here by a monk (see areas M4–M5), that monk joins the others. The members of the order are upset about the poisoning of the falcons. They've ruled out the shipwreck survivors as suspects, concluding that the falcons were killed on Ronnom's orders. The monks don't know how to proceed, given that Ronnom refuses to leave, and they can't force him to do so. Anish believes the characters' arrival is a gift.

After inquiring about the characters' business at the monastery, Anish tells them he'd like to make a request of them. If the characters are interested, read or paraphrase the following:

> The aasimar tightens his grip on his cane as he speaks. "A guest of the monastery, Ronnom Daamos, has many enemies. Unbeknownst to us, he came to Najkir a wanted man, and he and his bodyguards won't leave—and won't allow anyone else to leave, either. Skalanthas the dragon is beholden to Ronnom, as the dragon was to Ronnom's mother years ago. Ishyllia Daamos was a knight of valor, but her son is anything but. So we turn to you. Will you help us?"

In response to the characters' questions, the monks share information (see "What the Residents Know") and ask the characters to end the threat posed by Ronnom Daamos and his bodyguards without incurring the wrath of Skalanthas. If the characters tell the hierarch that Skalanthas has been sinking ships that sail near the island, the hierarch shakes his head sadly and suggests that if Skalanthas knew about Ronnom's crimes, the dragon surely would act differently.

Quest Accepted. Should the characters agree to help, Anish tells them that Ronnom and his bodyguards reside on the lower level. If the characters don't know how to get there, Anish asks one of the monks to lead them to the north stairs (area M23). Anish also gives them a key that unlocks the door to a dungeon cell on the lower level (area M30), should the characters wish to use it to lock up prisoners.

Quest Declined. If the characters decline to help, Anish warns them that Skalanthas protects Ronnom's secret by preventing anyone from leaving the island. Anish thinks Skalanthas knows nothing about the man's crimes and serves him out of loyalty to House Daamos.

Accommodation. Regardless of whether the characters accept the quest, if they or any *Wavemount* crew wish to stay at the monastery, the monks direct them to the guest quarters (area M11), where they can stay as long as they like.

M18: Crypt

> Thirty clay urns line the walls of this room, which is shaped like a quarter circle. On the wall above each urn is a painting depicting a monk in a meditative pose.

After a hierarch's death, a clay urn containing the deceased's ashes is stored here under a portrait the monks have painted of the deceased. Each clay urn is etched with the name of the hierarch whose ashes it contains. (Examples include Abul-Zaar, Jaltus, Larai, Sersiah, and Tymorn.)

Bypassing Maze Traps. The rituals performed in area M21 have imbued each urn with magic that allows a person who touches it to bypass the traps in area M22. As a Magic action, a character can touch an urn and focus on the name etched on its lid. For the next 24 hours, the traps in area M22 don't affect that character. The character understands that this magic protects them from traps, but this action does not reveal the traps' location.

M19: Weavers' Room

> This room contains a wooden loom and baskets containing spindles, yarn and thread, shears, shuttles, and bottles of dye.

Using wool collected from island sheep, the monks weave their own garments. Characters searching the room can combine the supplies to make two sets of Weaver's Tools.

M20: Potters' Room

> This room contains a potter's wheel, jugs of water, and a stack of clay bricks wrapped in damp cloth.

The monks use this facility to make clay urns (like the ones in area M18) and dishes. Characters searching the room can combine the supplies to make two sets of Potter's Tools.

M21: Ritual Chamber

Darkness envelops this room. If the characters have a way of seeing in the dark, read or paraphrase the following:

> This unlit room contains three statues standing with their backs against the walls, forming a triangle. Each statue depicts a robed monk whose face is obscured by a sagging cowl. The hands of each statue grasp a ceremonial sconce that looks like it's meant to hold a torch. A closed wooden cabinet stands against the east wall.

A character who examines the chamber and takes a Study action can make a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check. On a success, the character concludes the room is used for rituals, though their exact nature is unclear.

When a hierarch dies, the monks gather here to meditate on the spirit of the hierarch near an urn containing the leader's ashes. This ritual imbues the urn with magic that enables creatures to bypass the traps in area M22; see the crypt (area M18) for details.

Cabinet. The cabinet against the east wall is unlocked and contains the following supplies:

Three Bells (used in ceremonies)
One Tinderbox
Twelve Torches
Four *Spell Scrolls* (*Bless*, *Detect Magic*, *False Life*, and *Protection from Evil and Good*)

Secret Door. Any character who looks for secret doors and takes a Search action can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character finds a secret door in the north wall, which is locked. If the characters place three lit torches in the statues' sconces, the secret door unlocks. The door silently locks again if one or more of the torches go out or are removed from their sconces. A *Knock* spell also unlocks the secret door. It otherwise can't be opened.

Pushing on the door when it's unlocked causes it to swing open into the maze vault (area M22).

M22: Maze Vault

This area is in Darkness. If the characters have a way of seeing in the dark, read or paraphrase the following:

> Behind the secret door lies a narrow, dusty tunnel festooned with cobwebs. The tunnel has two openings to the west—one close by, the other farther away.
>
> Next to the secret door, drawn on the east wall in white chalk, is a stick figure holding what looks like a snake.

The monks hide the monastery's wealth in this small labyrinth. The secret door leading to the vault can be pulled open from the inside even if it's locked from the outside.

Chalk Figure. Any character who has met Hierarch Anish can ascertain that the chalk figure drawn on the wall represents Anish and his *Staff of the Python*. This drawing is a clue for bypassing the maze's traps (see "Traps" below).

Statue. At the end of one passage stands a Medium stone statue of a pig. The statue is magical and has a coin slot in the middle of its back.

Like a piggy bank, the statue is hollow. It holds the monastery's monetary wealth. If a creature speaks the command phrase "oink, oink, oink" while touching the statue, the pig's mouth magically opens, and all the statue's contents spill onto the floor.

The statue contains 4,660 GP, 2,752 SP, and 1,351 CP when the characters discover it. Most of this money was donated to the monastery. Casting an *Identify* spell on the statue reveals the command phrase, which otherwise only Hierarch Anish knows.

Breaking the statue also causes its contents to spill out. The statue has AC 17, HP 18, and Immunity to all damage except Bludgeoning and Force.

Traps. The maze contains five identical, magical traps, each marked with a *T* on map 5.1. A character who carries Hierarch Anish's *Staff of the Python* or who has touched an urn in the crypt (see area M18) can pass through these areas safely. Otherwise, whenever a creature enters one of these 5-foot-square areas, the creature makes a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) Lightning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Lower Level Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 5.2.

M23: North Stairs

This stairway connects the upper and lower levels of the monastery. Where the staircase bends, a hanging lantern lights a 5-foot-square landing.

M24: South Stairs

This stairway connects the kitchen (area M10) on the upper level with the storeroom (area M27) on the lower level. Where the staircase bends, a hanging lantern lights a 5-foot-square landing.

M25: Bodyguards' Quarters

> This room contains a pair of neatly made beds, a chest of drawers, and a small table flanked by two chairs. Seated at the table and playing a quiet game of three-dragon ante are two slender human men who look like brothers. They are both unarmed and unarmored.

Eko and Mok are shape-shifted **Doppelgangers** and Ronnom's loyal servants. They obey Ronnom's orders without question, fighting the characters if he commands them to. If the characters say they're looking for Ronnom, Eko and Mok offer to lead them to him (see area M26).

Other than their three-dragon ante Gaming Set, the doppelgangers carry nothing of value. The drawers are empty.

M26: Ronnom's Quarters

> This room contains two beds—one disheveled, the other neatly made—a chest of drawers, and a small table flanked by two chairs. Dirty dishes rest on the table. A shadowy hallway to the east leads to a door.

This area contains two hidden foes.

Ronnom Daamos. Aware of the trouble he's caused, Ronnom (Medium, Neutral Evil **Assassin**) is hiding in the Dim Light of the hallway to the east. Until the human man moves or speaks, noticing him requires taking a Search action and making a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. If Eko and Mok lead the characters here (see area M25), or if the characters arrive here from the east (area M36), Ronnom emerges from the shadows to parley with them. Otherwise, he tries to remain hidden.

Ronnom doesn't put himself in harm's way if he can help it. When confronted by one or more unfamiliar foes, he flees to Skalanthas's lair (area M38). If all routes to the lair are cut off, Ronnom tries to bribe enemies with the contents of his top drawer (see "Treasure" below). He fights as a last resort and surrenders if reduced to 20 Hit Points or fewer and unable to flee.

Veen. Veen is an **Oni** that has cast *Invisibility* on herself. Veen kidnapped Ronnom when he was a child. When the oni perceived the boy's malevolent nature, she befriended Ronnom, and the two remain allies to this day. Using her shape-shifting ability, Veen presents herself as a tall, red-haired, human woman with jade-green eyes. If the characters combat Ronnom, Veen fights to the death to defend him.

Chest of Drawers. The top drawer is unlocked and contains three satchels (see "Treasure") and four empty Vials. A character who examines the Vials as a Study action can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or an Intelligence check using Glassblower's Tools. On a success, the character detects poison residue inside each one. This poison killed the falcons in the aviary (area M5). The other drawers are empty.

Treasure. The first satchel in the chest of drawers contains 60 PP. The second satchel contains four pearls worth 100 GP each. The third satchel is empty but used to contain a bejeweled necklace that Ronnom gave to Skalanthas as a gift (see area M38).

M27: Storeroom

> This storeroom contains three wooden crates and three upright wooden barrels. Leaning in the northeast corner behind one of the barrels are a pair of wooden oars, a pair of fishing poles, and a silver-tipped spear. Three doors lead to other locations, while a narrow hallway stretches westward.

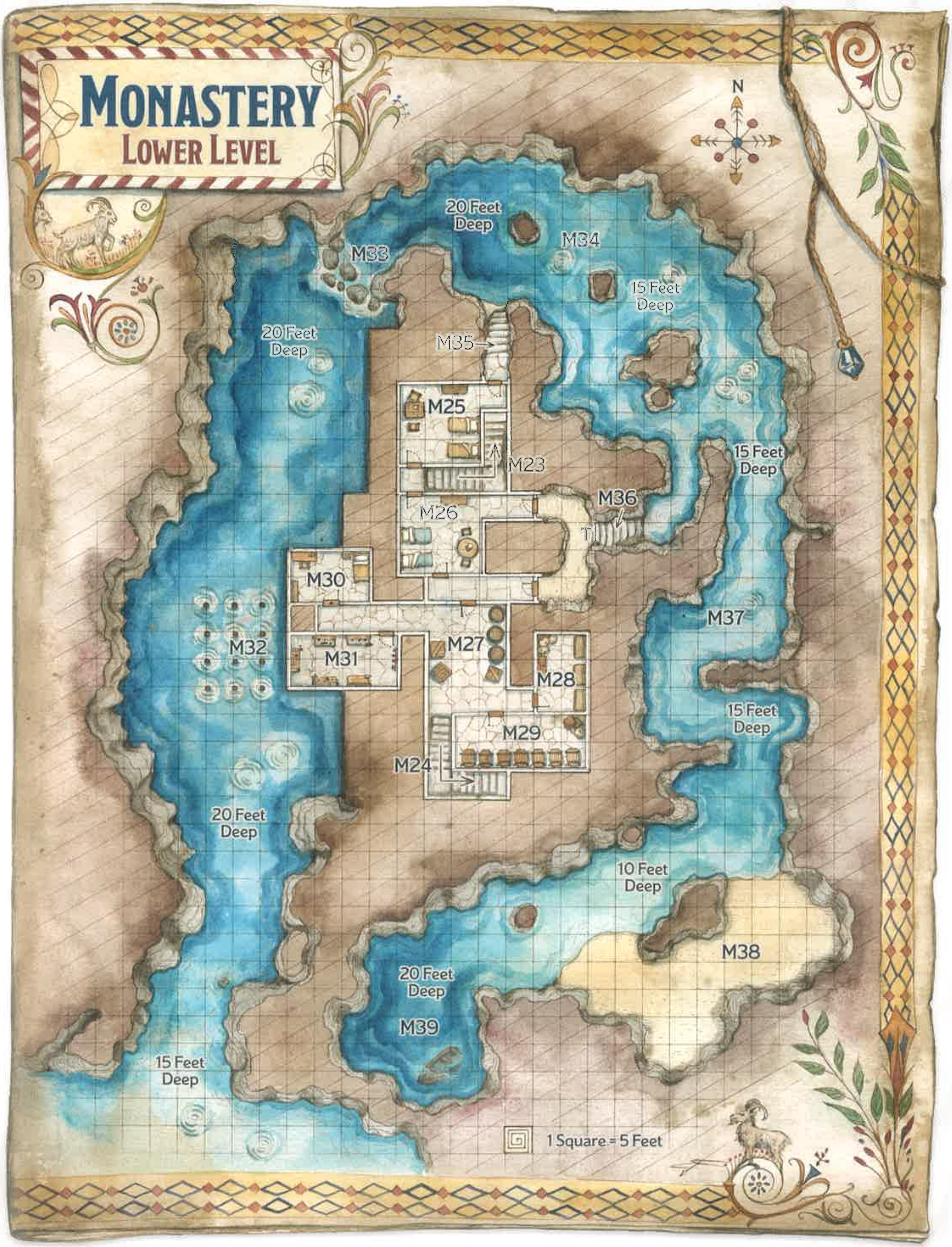
Each barrel contains 2d20 gallons of fresh water, and each crate holds 3d10 flasks of Oil. The oars are for the Rowboat at the dock (area M3). The fishing poles are nonmagical.

Treasure. The spear is a *Silvered Weapon* (Spear). The monks use it as a harpoon while fishing.

M28: Pantry

> Three wooden cabinets line the east wall of this pantry, and various crates, bags, and barrels are piled in the northwest corner.

The cabinets are unlocked and the pantry holds the following items:


MONASTERY
LOWER LEVEL
N
20 Feet Deep
M34
M33
15 Feet Deep
20 Feet Deep
M35
M25
M23
15 Feet Deep
M36
M26
T
M30
M37
M32
M27
M31
M28
15 Feet Deep
M29
M24
20 Feet Deep
10 Feet Deep
M38
20 Feet Deep
M39
15 Feet Deep
1 Square = 5 Feet

Map 5.2: Monastery Lower Level

Brewer's Supplies
Thirty Candles
One hundred Rations
Ten loaves of Bread
Ten wedges of Cheese

M29: Wine Cellar

> Seven wooden barrels line the south wall of this cellar.

Each barrel contains forty gallons of wine.

M30: Dungeon Cell

The door to this room is locked. Opening the door requires the proper key (typically in Hierarch Anish's possession), Thieves' Tools, or a *Knock* spell. The lock is simple (requiring 1 action to pick) and of good quality (DC 15).

> A barred window six inches long and four inches high allows visibility into the room beyond. The cell contains a neatly made bed and a chamber pot.

The cell contains nothing of interest.

M31: Workroom

> This room contains cluttered workbenches.

Characters who search the room find the following tools and supplies:

One set of Cobbler's Tools
One set of Mason's Tools
One set of Painter's Supplies
Two sets of Woodcarver's Tools

M32: Dock Posts

The light in this submerged cavern filters down from the cave above (area M2): Dim Light during the day, Darkness at night.

> The stone dock above is supported by twelve stone posts spaced five feet apart. Barnacles cover the posts.

Because the posts are so narrowly spaced, Skalanthas prefers to swim around them. They are Difficult Terrain for him to swim through.

M33: Blocked and Submerged Tunnel

This 10-foot-diameter tunnel is completely submerged and blocked by heavy boulders.

As Skalanthas comes and goes from his lair, the dragon moves the boulders aside to clear the passage for himself, then moves them back to discourage others from using the tunnel. A Small creature can squirm between the boulders with a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, treating the boulders as Difficult Terrain. A Medium character can do the same but has Disadvantage on the check. Moving boulders aside to create a wider opening through which Medium and Small creatures can pass without making a check requires 10 minutes of work and a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

M34: Partially Flooded Cave

> Three natural pillars of rock support the uneven ceiling of this partially flooded cave.

The water is 20 feet deep in the western half of the area and 15 feet deep otherwise. The uneven ceiling is roughly 20 feet above water level.

M35: Damp Stairs

A flight of damp, rough-hewn stairs leads down from the bodyguards' quarters (area M25) to a dark, partially flooded cave (area M34). The tunnel containing these stairs is in Darkness.

M36: Trip Wire Trap

These damp, rough-hewn stairs lead down from the lower level of the monastery to a partially flooded cave (area M34). At the midpoint of the staircase, a shallow niche in the south wall contains a wooden box that is actually a *Folding Boat* and a lit Hooded Lantern. Ronnom Daamos leaves these items here to help him reach Skalanthas's lair (area M38) when he wants to speak to the dragon.

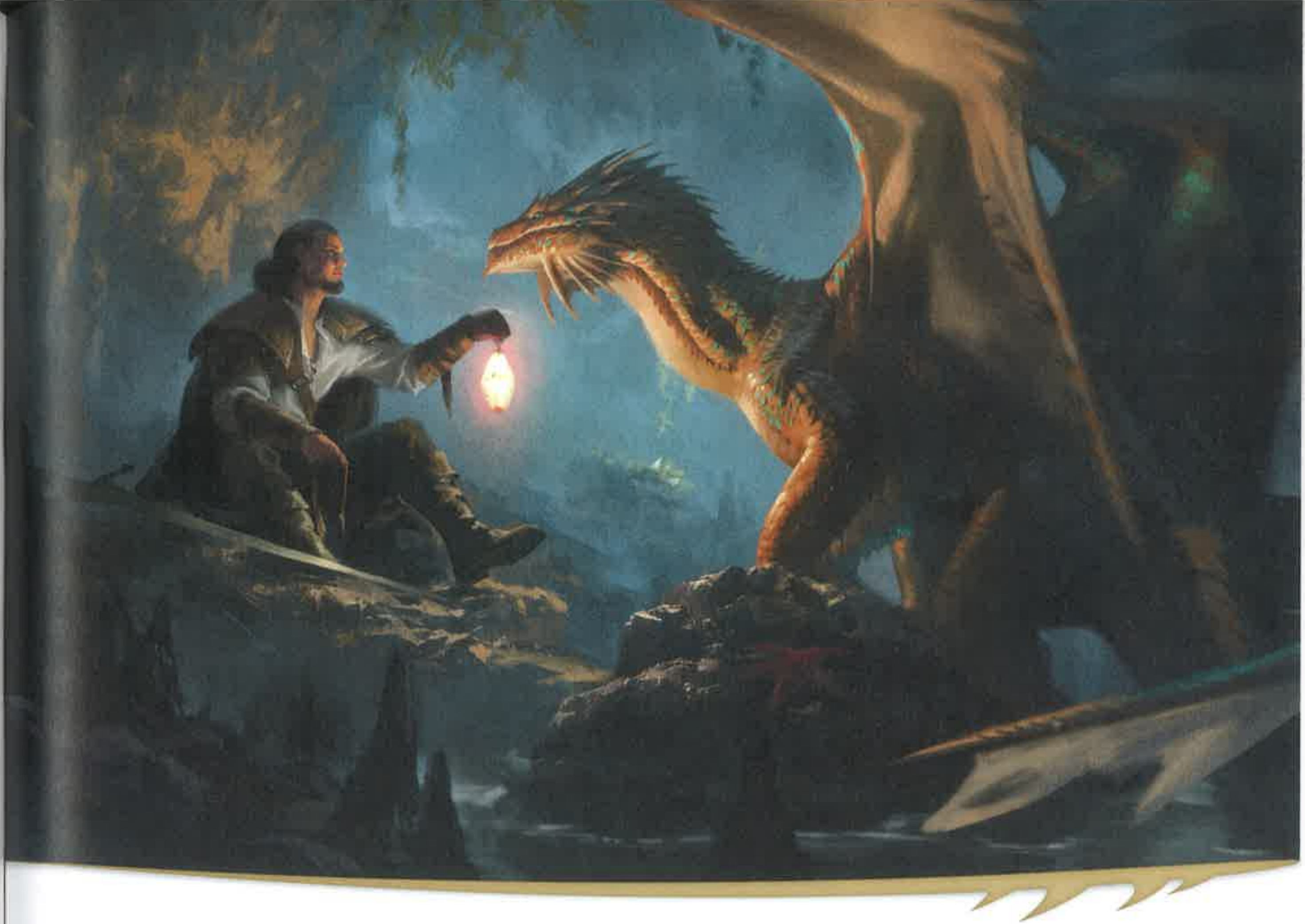
Trip Wire. Ronnom has rigged a trip wire across the top of the staircase. If forced to flee from his quarters (area M26), he steps over the wire to avoid it and takes the lantern and *Folding Boat*.

A character can take a Search action to inspect the staircase for traps and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character finds the trip wire. Once detected, the wire is easily avoided or cut.

A character using the stairs who fails to detect the wire snags on it, has the Prone condition, and takes 3 (1d6) Bludgeoning damage from the fall.

M37: Partially Flooded Tunnel

The water in this tunnel is 15 feet deep, and the uneven ceiling rises 15 feet above water level.



JOSHUA RAPHAEL

M38: Skalanthas's Lair

> A natural pillar of rock supports the uneven roof of this damp cave, whose floor rises out of the water to form a shelf above sea level. Lounging on the shelf is a bronze dragon.

The water in the northwest part of this area is 10 feet deep. The ceiling throughout the area is 20 feet above water level.

Skalanthas the **Young Bronze Dragon** occupies the section of the cave that's above water, using the natural pillar of rock for cover. He is initially Hostile toward interlopers.

Roleplaying Skalanthas. The dragon values his own life; if reduced to 30 Hit Points or fewer, Skalanthas dives underwater, flees via the sea caves, and takes refuge somewhere else on the island.

Should Ronnom retreat to this cave, he urges Skalanthas to prepare for the characters' arrival. The dragon fights Ronnom's enemies on sight; meanwhile, Ronnom tries to stay hidden and out of harm's way, entering combat only if the risk to himself is minimal.

If Ronnom isn't present, characters can shift Skalanthas's attitude from Hostile to Indifferent by apologizing for the intrusion and claiming to be acting on behalf of the monks. Skalanthas's attitude reverts to Hostile if a character threatens or belittles him, tries to drive a wedge between him and Ronnom, or heads toward Skalanthas's hoard (area M39).

If a character asks Skalanthas why he sinks ships, the dragon explains that drastic actions are necessary to protect Ronnom from enemies who seek to destroy him and House Daamos.

Convincing Skalanthas of Ronnom's villainy is difficult, given the dragon's fondness for Ronnom's mother and history with House Daamos. The dragon is far more inclined to believe the son of Ishyllia Daamos than the words of a stranger.

However, if Ronnom is reduced to 20 Hit Points or fewer, the characters can compel Ronnom to confess his crimes in exchange for his life. If Skalanthas witnesses this confession, the dragon feels betrayed and enforces any agreement Ronnom is forced to make with the characters.

See "Conclusion" for ways in which the characters can come to terms with the dragon.

M39: Dead-End Cave and Sunken Hoard

The water in this cave is 20 feet deep, and the damp ceiling is only 10 feet above the water.

Treasure. Lying on the floor of this cave is the sunken, barnacle-encrusted wreck of a Rowboat piled high with items Skalanthas recovered from shipwrecks amid the reefs around Najkir:

Chest without a lid containing 450 GP, a bejeweled necklace (worth 750 GP), two electrum bracelets inlaid with gold (worth 250 GP each), and four silver rings (worth 25 GP each)
Closed, unlocked Chest that contains 5,000 SP and twenty spools of gold thread (worth 25 GP each)
Spyglass
Jade crown (worth 2,500 GP)
2-foot-tall alabaster statue of a knight on a horse (worth 250 GP and weighing 25 pounds)
Latched wooden box inlaid with mother-of pearl (worth 25 GP), inside which are six *Beads of Nourishment* and six *Beads of Refreshment*
Moon-Touched Sword (Rapier)
Rusty anchor (worthless, but necessary to keep the boat from drifting)

Conclusion

The adventure can end in one of several ways. Likely endings are discussed below.

If the characters completed the quest Mirel Astafar gave them, she rewards them as promised.

Skalanthas Retreats

Should the party force Skalanthas to flee, he flies to a quiet corner of the island and takes a Long Rest there before returning to reclaim his lair. If Ronnom is nearby when Skalanthas flees and is still on good terms with him, Ronnom mounts the dragon, and the two of them return to the monastery together.

Until the dragon is fully rested, ships can come and go from the island without danger.

Ronnom Is Slain

If Ronnom dies, his surviving bodyguards try to exact revenge by killing those responsible.

When Skalanthas learns of Ronnom's death, the dragon is furious but stops threatening ships traveling to and from Najkir.

Rewards

If the characters take Ronnom's corpse with them to the mainland, they discover local authorities are offering a 2,500 GP reward for his remains, payable upon delivery.

Ronnom Is Captured

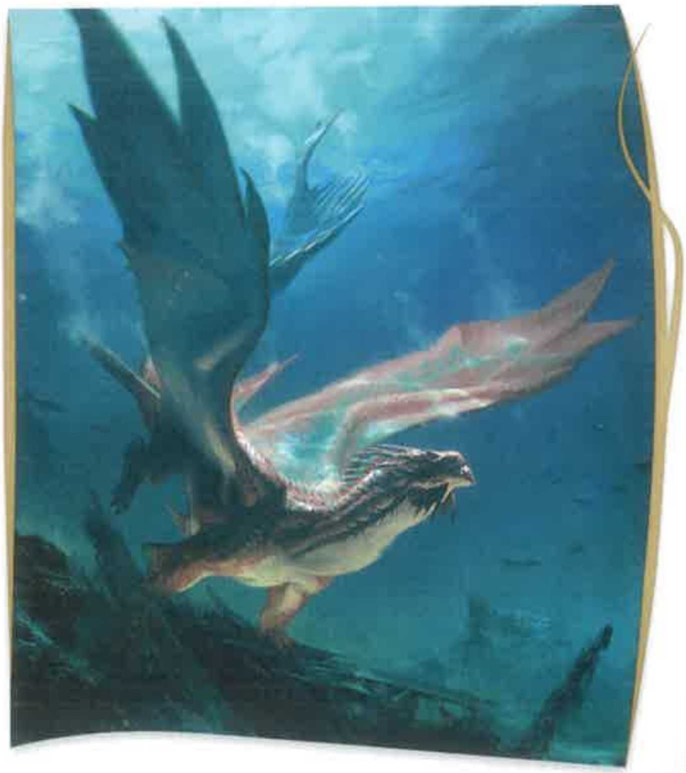
If Ronnom is taken into custody, the monks recommend confining him to the dungeon cell (area M30) until he can be transported to the mainland.

If the characters no longer have a ship to transport them back to the mainland, Devi can use her *Sending Stone* to contact Mirel Astafar, who sends another ship to the island. However, the characters must stop Skalanthas from sinking the ship. Skalanthas won't sink a ship if he knows Ronnom is aboard.

Should Ronnom confess his crimes in Skalanthas's presence, the dragon is dismayed and chastises Ronnom for dishonoring House Daamos. Skalanthas ends his friendship with Ronnom and stops threatening ships traveling to and from Najkir. Furthermore, if the characters explain that they're stranded on the island, the dragon gives them the *Folding Boat* he previously loaned to Ronnom (see area M26) to help them get home and deliver Ronnom to the authorities.

Rewards

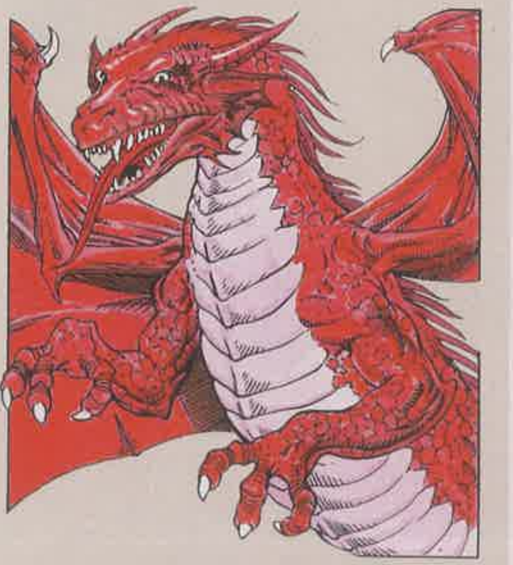
If the characters take Ronnom to the mainland to answer for his crimes, they discover there's a 5,000 GP reward for capturing him alive. The characters need only hand him over to local authorities to collect the reward.



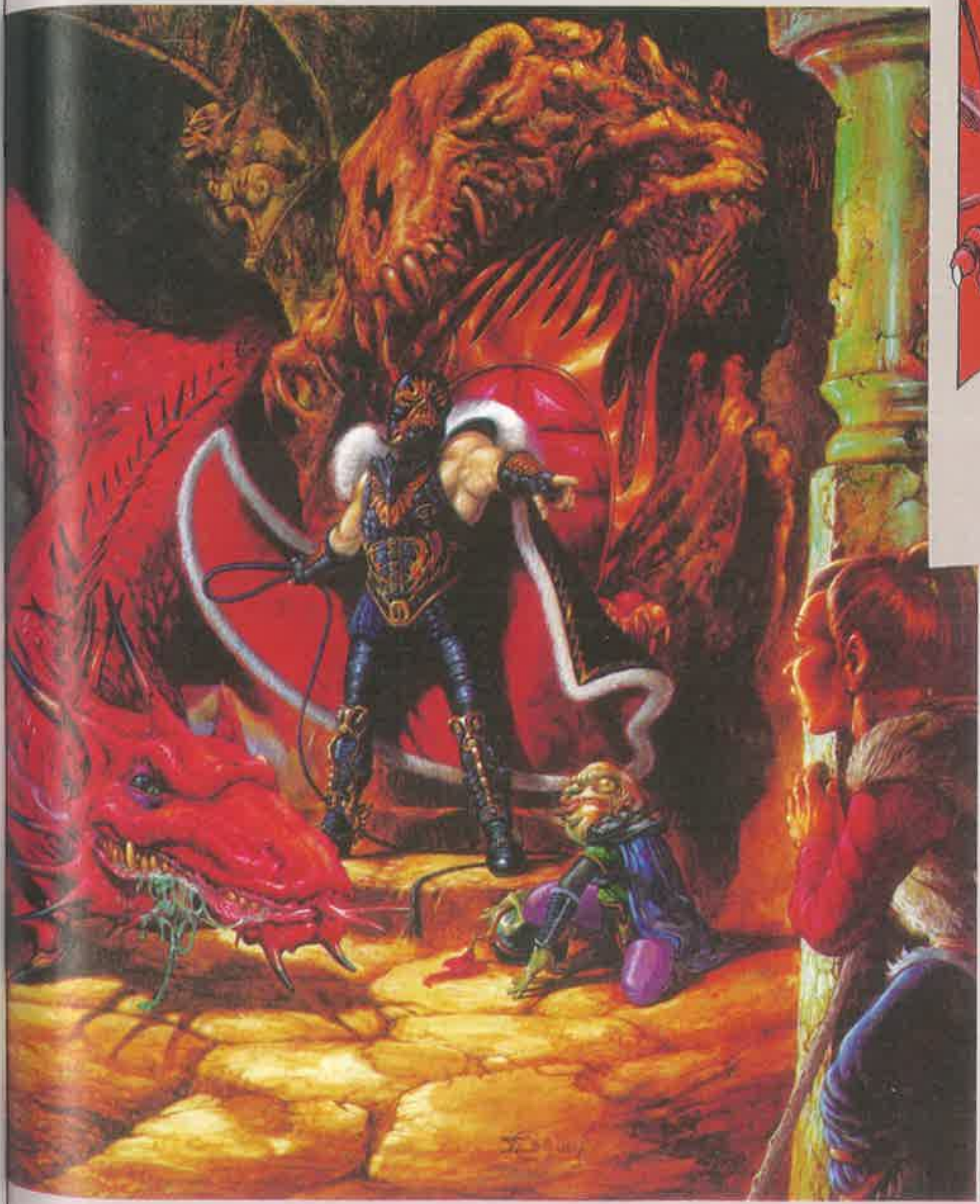
JOSHUA RAPHAEL

HISTORY OF
RED DRAGONS

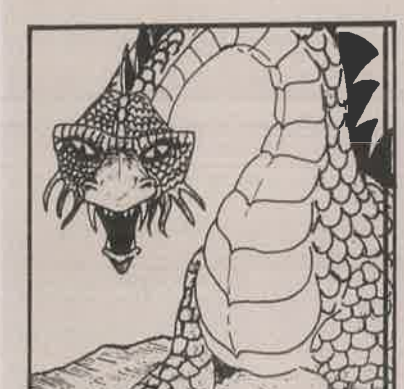
Aside from their fiery red scales, red dragons' most constant feature through the years is the frill of horns at their cheeks. Joshua Raphael's illustration for the 2025 *Monster Manual* accentuates this feature as it catches the light of the dragon's fire breath.



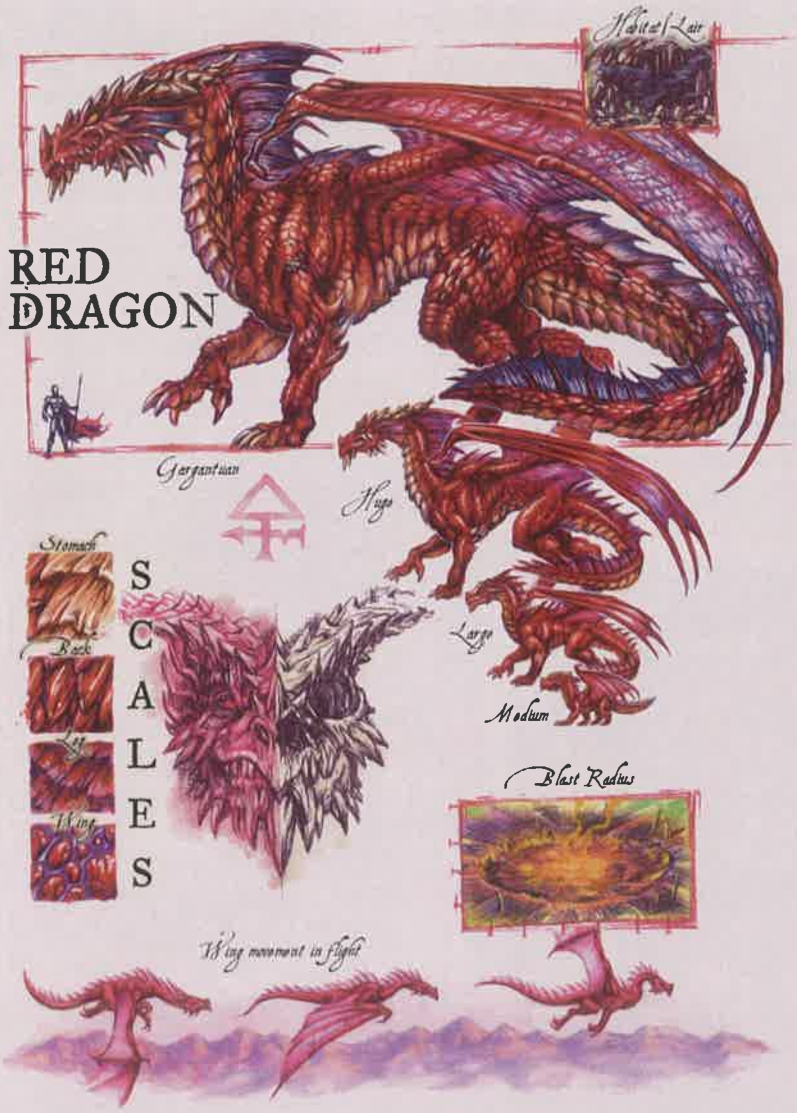
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



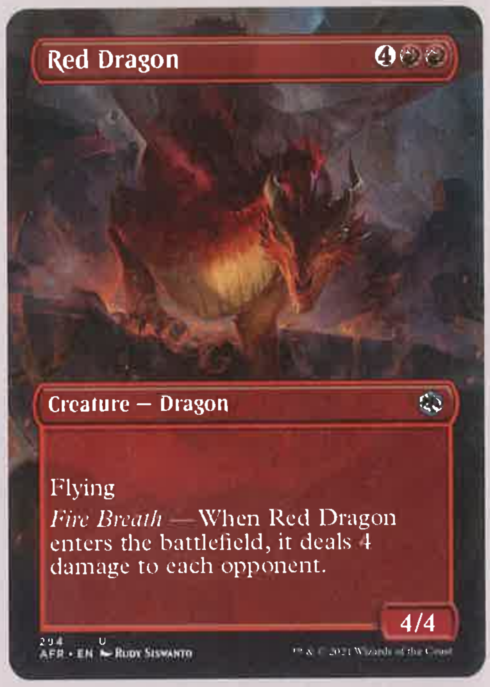
Dragons of Flame (1984)
Artist: Jeff Easley



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


Habitat/Lair
RED DRAGON
Gargantuan
Huge
Stomach
Back
Leg
Wing
SCALES
Large
Medium
Blast Radius
Wing movement in flight

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Ron Spencer


Red Dragon

Creature — Dragon

Flying
Fire Breath — When Red Dragon enters the battlefield, it deals 4 damage to each opponent.

4/4

294 U
AFR • EN Rudy Siswanto

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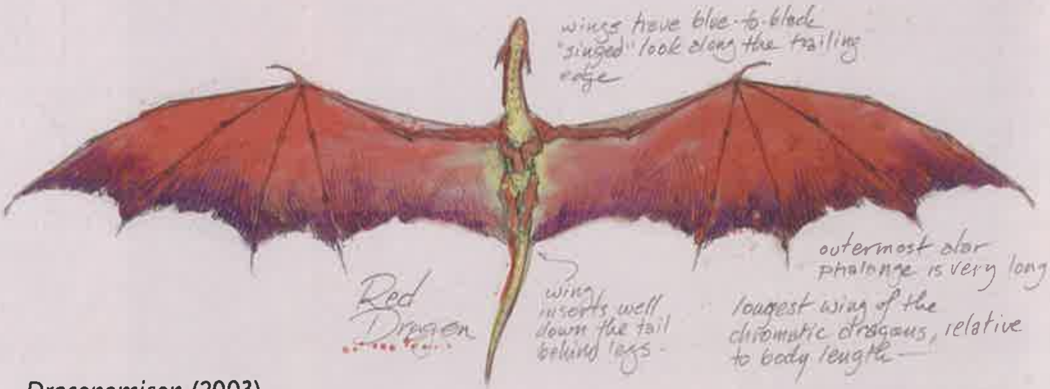
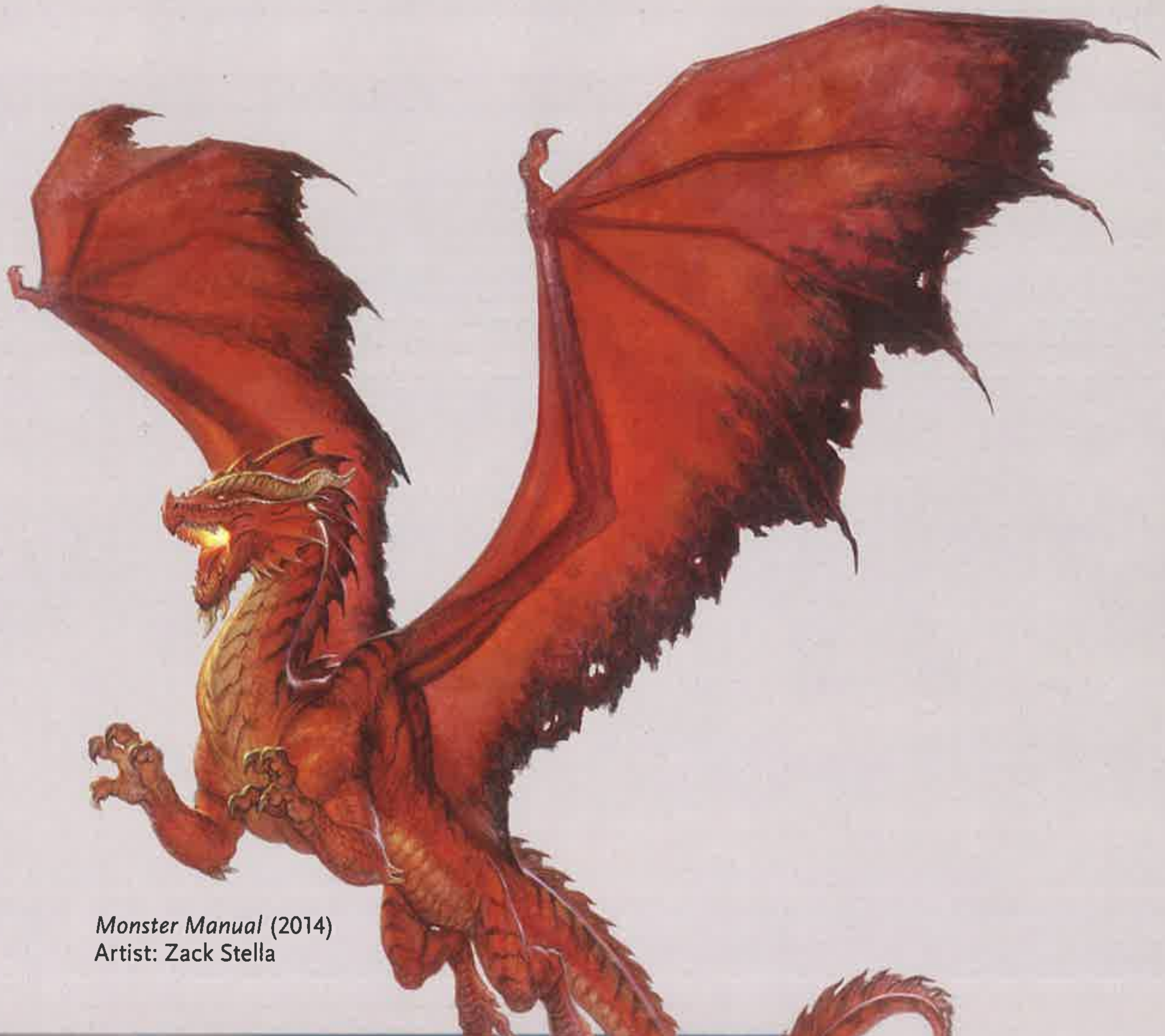
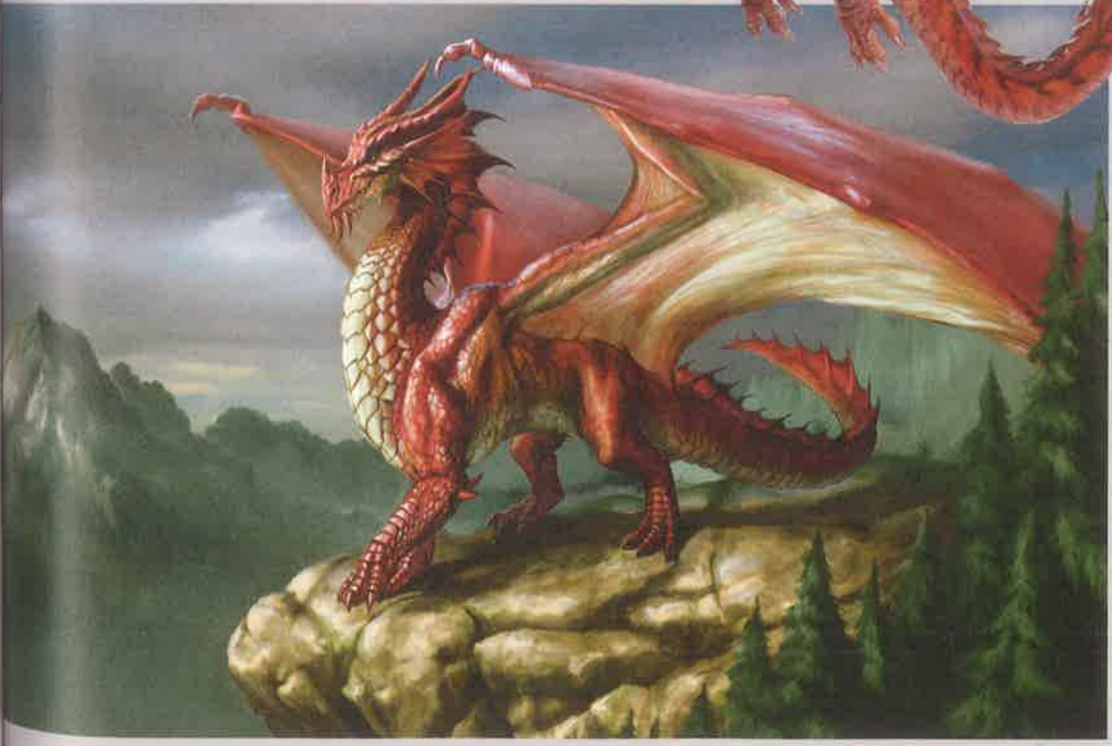
Adventures in the Forgotten Realms (2021)
Artist: Rudy Siswanto


wings have blue-to-black "singed" look along the trailing edge
outermost alar phalange is very long
Red Dragon
wing inserts well down the tail behind legs
longest wing of the chromatic dragons, relative to body length

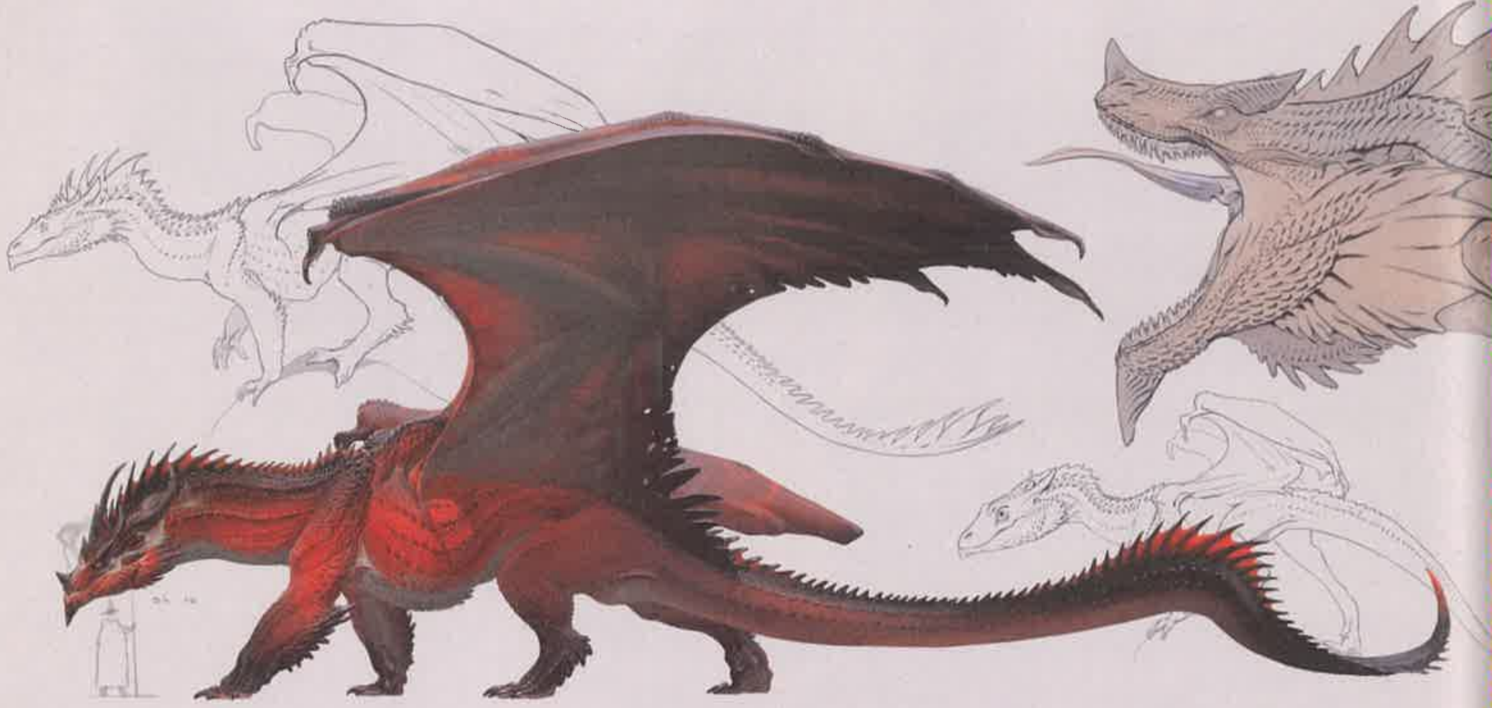
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



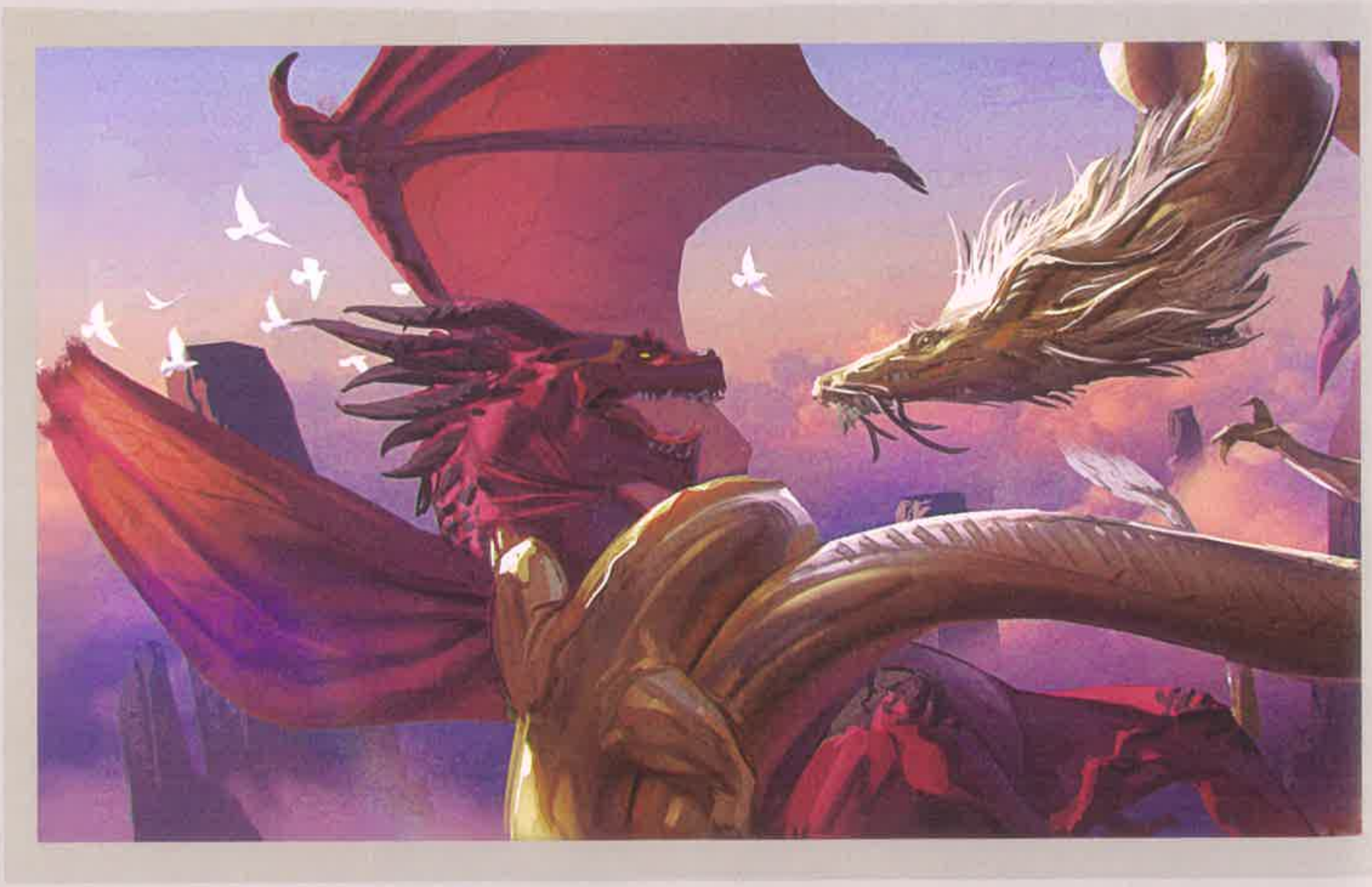
Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Zack Stella



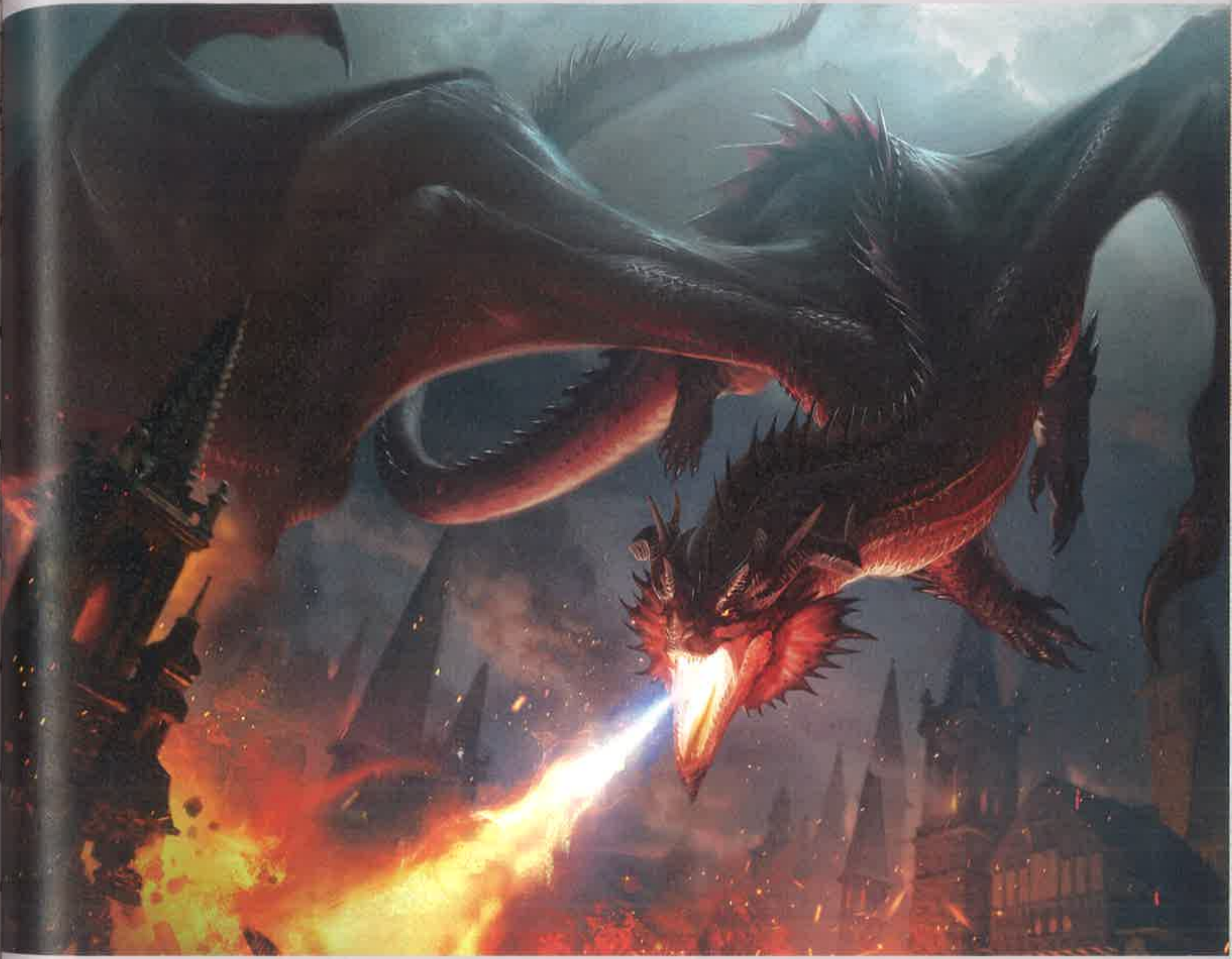
Monster Manual (2008)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



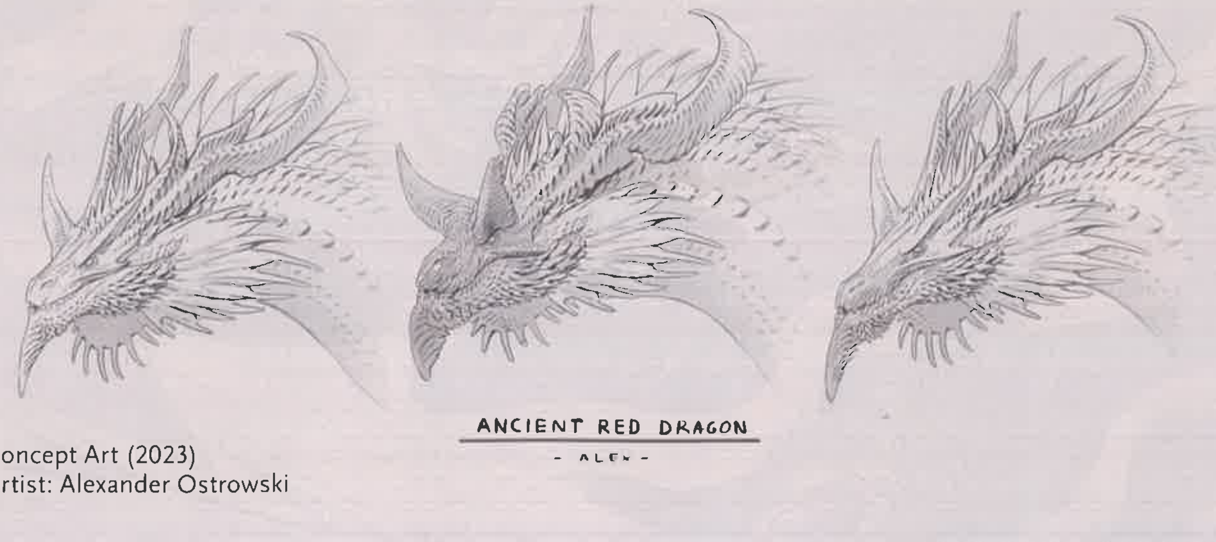
Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



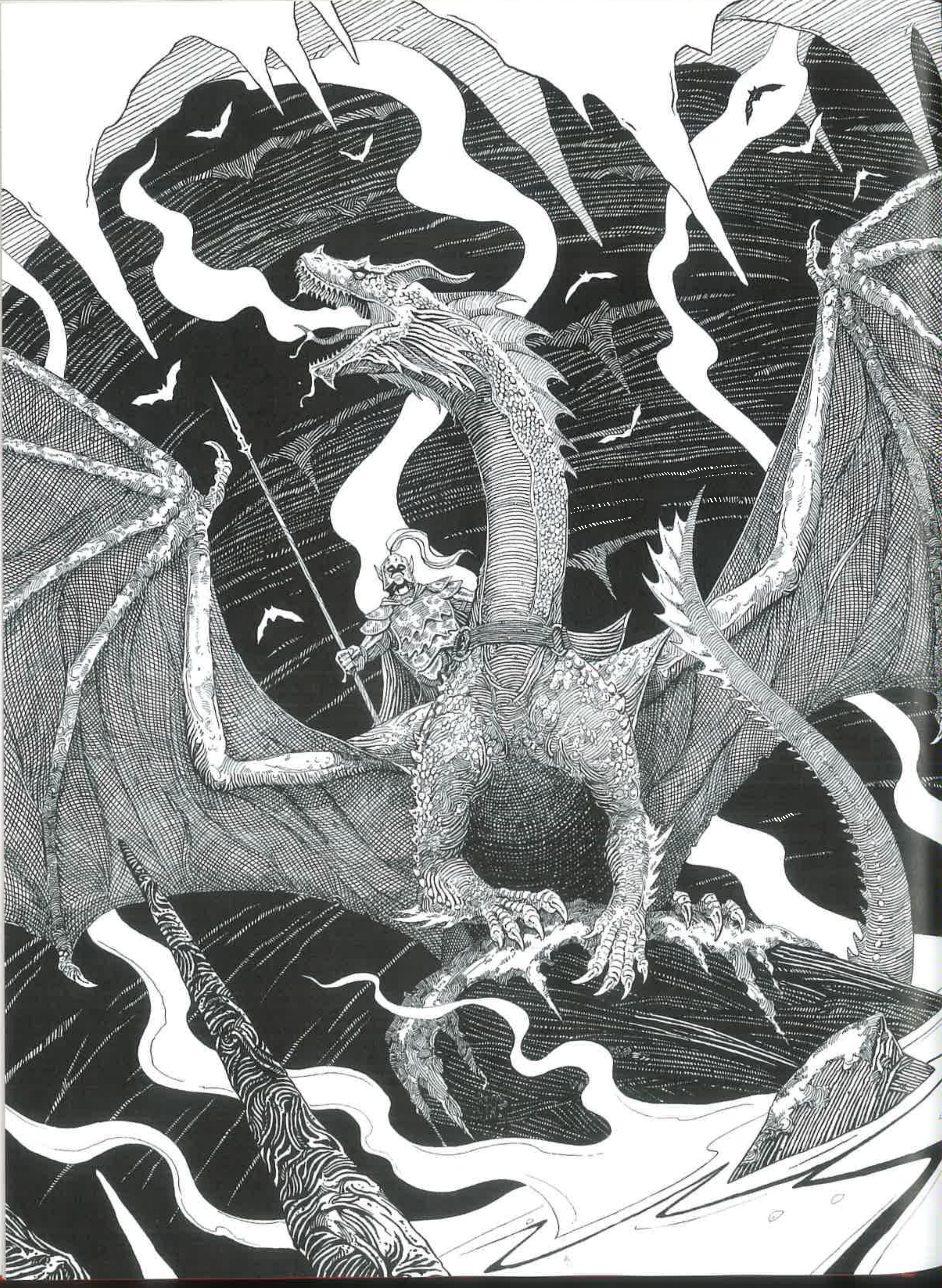
Concept Art (2023)
Artist: John Grello



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Joshua Raphael


ANCIENT RED DRAGON
- ALEX -

Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



CHAPTER 6

The Forbidden Vale

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 9
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL THREE OR FOUR SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT TAKES PLACE IN A REMOTE MOUNTAIN VALLEY.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to this adventure's story:

Mountain Wildfires. A red dragon is igniting wildfires near a small town called Arborean Springs. The adventurers need to stop the wildfires, but must decide whether to slay the dragon or return it to slumber using a potent sleeping concoction.

Forbidden Vale. The group journeys to the Forbidden Vale, facing wildfires and other natural threats on the way. The red dragon lairs in magical gardens that githyanki exiles built ages ago. In the gardens, the characters face the dragon and various other monstrous foes.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section.

Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the individuals described in the Key NPCs table. The characters will interact with these NPCs throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Archpriest
Behir
Berserker
Bulette
Chimera
Cyclops Warrior
Druid
Fire Elemental
Flameskull
Githyanki Knight
Green Hag
Grick Ancient
Guard
Hill Giant
Hydra
Manticore
Marid
Mephit, Smoke
Mind Flayer
Noble
Noble Prodigy
Owlbear
Red Dragon, Young
Roc
Skeleton, Flaming
Spirit Naga
Tough Boss
Treant
Troll
Yuan-ti Malison (Type 3)

KEY NPCS

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Catacus	Druidic elf elder who wants the dragon protected	**Archpriest** (Medium)	"Nature Lovers"
Eblus	Elf who disappeared three months ago	**Druid** (Medium)	G21
Deathkiss, Demondream, and Murderbliss	Allies of Xabazhut	**Green Hag**	G15
Duban	Ozzadraz's unwilling servant	**Marid**	G25
Ginder Nanik	Human merchant who wants to exploit the gardens' magic	**Noble Prodigy** (Medium)	"Merchants"
Gree	Javek Horn's human ancestor, long missing	**Berserker** (Small)	G21
Hate's Embrace	Garden guardian	**Spirit Naga**	G6
Javek and Vara Horn	Human elders trying to protect the region	**Tough Bosses** (Small)	"Traditionalists"
Ozzadraz	Githyanki commander in suspended animation	**Githyanki Knight**	G12
Serev	Human from Arcadian Springs	**Noble** (Medium)	G21
Xabazhut	The gardens' dragon protector	**Young Red Dragon**	G14
Zumzn	Githyanki transformed into a treant	**Treant** (Neutral)	G24

Adventure Background

Ages ago, four powerful githyanki who were banished from the Astral Plane for treason against their lich-queen built a ziggurat in a region now known as the Forbidden Vale. There they cultivated magical plants to extend their lives. From this idyllic capital, the githyanki conquered the surrounding region with the aid of a red dragon who followed them into exile.

In the end, though, the same fractiousness that set these githyanki against their lich-queen turned them against each other, and their subjects took advantage of this weakness to throw off their yoke. The kingdom's subjects defeated the githyanki and declared independence, but centuries later, the magical gardens endure under the watchful protection of a different red dragon, Xabazhut.

Xabazhut is a young dragon born from the ashes of the ancient dragon who died in the gardens. He now seeks to carry on the ancient dragon's tradition of driving people away from the valley. Every two centuries, the ancient dragon flew over the region, raining down fiery destruction. This bicentennial rampage ensured that people didn't build their farms and villages too close to the valley. Xabazhut now carries out this practice of his forebear.

Githyanki Exiles

The four githyanki who created the Forbidden Vale and its magical gardens filled different roles and came to different ends:

Kh'krai, a mage, was responsible for much of the magic in the gardens. He attempted to overthrow Ozzadraz and was killed.

Ozzadraz was the military commander of the githyanki exiles and ruler of their kingdom. After the realm fell, he entered a state of suspended animation and lies in state within the first tier of the gardens (area G12).

Suthket designed the gardens. She sided with Kh'krai in his revolt and also was killed.

Zumzn was responsible for cultivating the gardens. Ultimately, she became one with the plants she tended, transforming into a treant who now guards the top tier of the gardens (area G24).

Beginning the Adventure

The characters are traveling near the Paradise Mountains when wildfires catch their attention. As they travel, they notice that a curtain of smoke tints the midday sky an unnatural shade of orange.

You can decide why the characters are traveling in the region; they might just be passing through or be traveling to the town of Arborean Springs. Perhaps local residents sent messengers to nearby communities seeking help from adventurers. The characters might all have dreamed about a lush valley threatened by wildfires or received a divine message directing them to the valley. Or they could plan to visit the hot springs in town as a relaxing break from their adventures.

When the characters investigate the smoke's source, they find the town of Arborean Springs.

Arborean Springs

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters approach Arborean Springs:

> A small town surrounded by ancient stone walls perches on a rocky outcropping overlooking a valley containing hot springs and lush fields. In the fields beyond, wheat and barley grow in abundance alongside flourishing vineyards. Sheep and goats graze on the surrounding hills. The town itself is a mix of recent wooden construction and ancient stone buildings.

The people of Arborean Springs fall into three broad groups:

Traditionalists. Most of the people of Arborean Springs are farmers and herders descended from folk the githyanki subjugated ages ago. Their folklore describes this history, though it has become distorted over time.

Nature Lovers. After the fall of the githyanki's kingdom, followers of a druidic nature religion came here, drawn by the unique plants that have spread from the githyanki's magical gardens.

Merchants. In the two centuries since the dragon's last fiery rampage, the town's population has expanded significantly, with merchants, artisans, and entrepreneurs seeking to profit from the health benefits of the town's hot springs.

These groups are described in more detail in the next section.

Interacting with Townsfolk

Tensions are high in Arborean Springs when the characters arrive. The wildfires present a significant threat to the surrounding fields and pasturelands. Already the little town can't accommodate the people the fires have displaced.

Some townspeople are aware that a dragon caused the wildfires. They recognize that the dragon could threaten the town even if wind doesn't carry the wildfires there. The most prominent locals disagree about what to do, and this has exacerbated tensions.

Townsfolk are initially Indifferent to the characters. If the characters seek out local leaders, they're quickly directed to Catacus (see "Nature Lovers"), Javek and Vara Horn (see "Traditionalists"), or Ginder Nanik (see "Merchants"). If the characters are more interested in talking to people on the street, they encounter merchants and traditionalists, but they might also find members of the Burning Circle (see "Nature Lovers" below). Each group's general opinions align with its leader's, as described below.

Nature Lovers

Herbalists, naturalists, and druids came to Arborean Springs not long after the fall of the githyanki exiles' realm, drawn by the special plants that grow near the gardens on Mount Glathek. Their initial attempts to explore the gardens were rebuffed by a red dragon living there. The dragon retaliated against this intrusion by igniting a cataclysmic wildfire that almost eliminated the young town of Arborean Springs and the surrounding farms and pasturelands. This rampage turned out to be the first of many.

Burning Circle. A small group of nature priests calling themselves the Burning Circle teach that the dragon is a force of nature to be respected, not destroyed. Just as controlled burns are necessary to keep forests healthy, they say, the dragon's rampages are an essential part of nature's cycle. The length of each rampage should be kept short, though, to reduce danger to locals.

Circle members have developed a means to keep the dragon's rampages relatively short. They have a recipe for a concoction that can usher the dragon quickly back to its centuries-long slumber once the wildfires have raged long enough. When the bright-orange dragoneye flower blooms in the ashes where the fires have run their course, it is time to put the dragon back to sleep. That time is at hand.

RUNNING ARBOREAN SPRINGS

You can spend as much or as little time in Arborean Springs as you and your players want. The simplest approach is to steer the characters toward the NPC who will put them on the path you think they'll find most enjoyable. If they relish combat challenges, introduce them to the merchant Ginder Nanik, who pleads with the characters to go slay the dragon. Steer them to Catacus if they'd enjoy the treasure hunt of gathering ingredients to return the dragon to slumber, or local elders Javek and Vara Horn if they'd enjoy spending more time exploring the region. If your players want to interact with the various NPCs and weigh the different options these individuals present, then spend up to a whole game session in Arborean Springs playing out these interactions.

The Gardens' History. The Burning Circle preserves what little lore is known about the Gardens of Xabazhut. Circle members know the gardens grow in a stepped structure made up of three tiers. The first tier is called the Garden of Sacred Repose, the second is the Garden of Unearthly Delights, and the third is the Garden of Everflowing Springs. The priests are unsure of these names' origins.

Catacus. The Burning Circle's leader is a world-weary wood elf named Catacus (Medium **Archpriest**), who has survived two previous rampages. In the first one, four hundred years ago, Catacus volunteered to join the adventurers who tried to put the dragon back to sleep. He saw the dragon—"an enormous, ancient wyrm"—and sustained severe injuries before the other adventurers managed to deliver the sleeping concoction. He uses an exquisitely carved wooden wheelchair whenever he needs to travel more than a few hundred feet.

Now that the dragoneye flower is blooming, Catacus and the other members of the Burning Circle urge the characters and townsfolk to brew the concoction and use it to put the dragon back to sleep. They are convinced that the dragon's death would spell catastrophe for the region, as people would plunder the gardens—the source of the region's magic.

The Sleeping Concoction. If the characters are amenable to the Burning Circle's solution, Catacus gives them a list of plants to find in the gardens and a recipe to make the concoction. After the characters locate the ingredients, they can brew it in 1 hour using Alchemist's Supplies or Brewer's Supplies (Catacus happily lends characters a set of Alchemist's Supplies if needed).

Catacus explains that the characters must coat their weapons in the concoction and injure the dragon with those weapons until he retreats to his lair and enters a magical slumber. (The dragon retreats when he has taken 90 damage from weapons or ammunition coated in the sleeping concoction.) However, Catacus warns, the dragon will awaken immediately if he becomes injured again or if anyone steals treasure from his lair.

Once applied to a weapon or piece of ammunition, the concoction retains its potency for 24 hours. It has no effect on creatures other than the red dragon of the Forbidden Vale.

The recipe requires the following ingredients from the gardens:

Three Arborean rose blossoms from the Garden of Sacred Repose (area G13)
Two Arcadian lotus blossoms from the Garden of Unearthly Delights (area G20)
The fruit of life from the Garden of Everflowing Springs (area G24)

Missing Druid. If the characters agree to put the dragon back to sleep, Catacus reveals that a member of the Burning Circle named Eblus ventured toward the gardens about three months ago. Eblus hoped to learn more about the magical plants that grow there, but she never returned to Arborean Springs. (She is trapped in the mirror in area G21 of the Gardens of Xabazhut.)

Merchants

Merchants come to Arborean Springs between the dragon's rampages, but each new rampage drives them away. Within the last century, a new crop of business-minded people seeking to capitalize on the hot springs has come to town. The merchants who now live here are nervous for their homes and concerned about the wildfires' effect on business.

Ginder Nanik. A charming human, Ginder Nanik (Medium **Noble Prodigy**), is the merchants' de facto leader and spokesperson. Though he couches everything in terms of "what the good folk of Arborean Springs want," Ginder puts commercial interests first, and the other merchants follow his lead. Ginder believes the dragon should be slain and the lands of the Forbidden Vale—including the ancient gardens in the valley's heart—should be claimed and made profitable.

Ginder and other merchants in town urge the characters to kill the dragon. They have no suggestions for how to accomplish this feat.

Traditionalists

The descendants of the githyanki's original subjects are largely farmers, herders, and hunters. Their folklore contains the only surviving historical accounts of the githyanki's kingdom. Their tales center around the dragon's rampages, which began when the region's people rose up in revolt against diabolical tyrants. These rulers are remembered today as magically powerful and casually cruel. They wielded shining swords, and their dragon ally breathed fire.

Local tales include stories of heroes who stood against the dragon to protect their herds or fields during past rampages, but according to their legends, if anyone enters the Forbidden Vale to confront the dragon, such a trespass will be punished with even more violence.

Javek and Vara Horn. Two married human shepherds, Javek Horn and Vara Horn (Small **Tough Bosses**), command the respect of most who follow the traditional ways of Arborean Springs. As two of the oldest human residents of the region, the women preserve and pass on ancient lore and freely share their hard-won wisdom with others. It is largely their influence that keeps the merchants from entering the Forbidden Vale.

Any traditionalist in town tells the characters the same thing: stay away from the Forbidden Vale lest they make the problem worse. If the characters feel like emulating the heroes of old, they should face the dragon outside the vale, trying to catch it while it's spreading flames across the hillsides.

To the Forbidden Vale

Map 6.1 shows the locations of Arborean Springs, the wildfires (shown in orange), the Forbidden Vale (area V8), and other key sites in the region. Each area is described further below.

Arborean Springs lies about 19 miles from the Forbidden Vale as the dragon flies. However, the easiest routes from the town to the vale bring the characters up one of two parallel river valleys that feed into the Celestial River. The western Bytopian River valley is a steeper climb, while the eastern Ysgardian River valley is a longer route. Characters can choose their own route, but the most likely course looks like this:

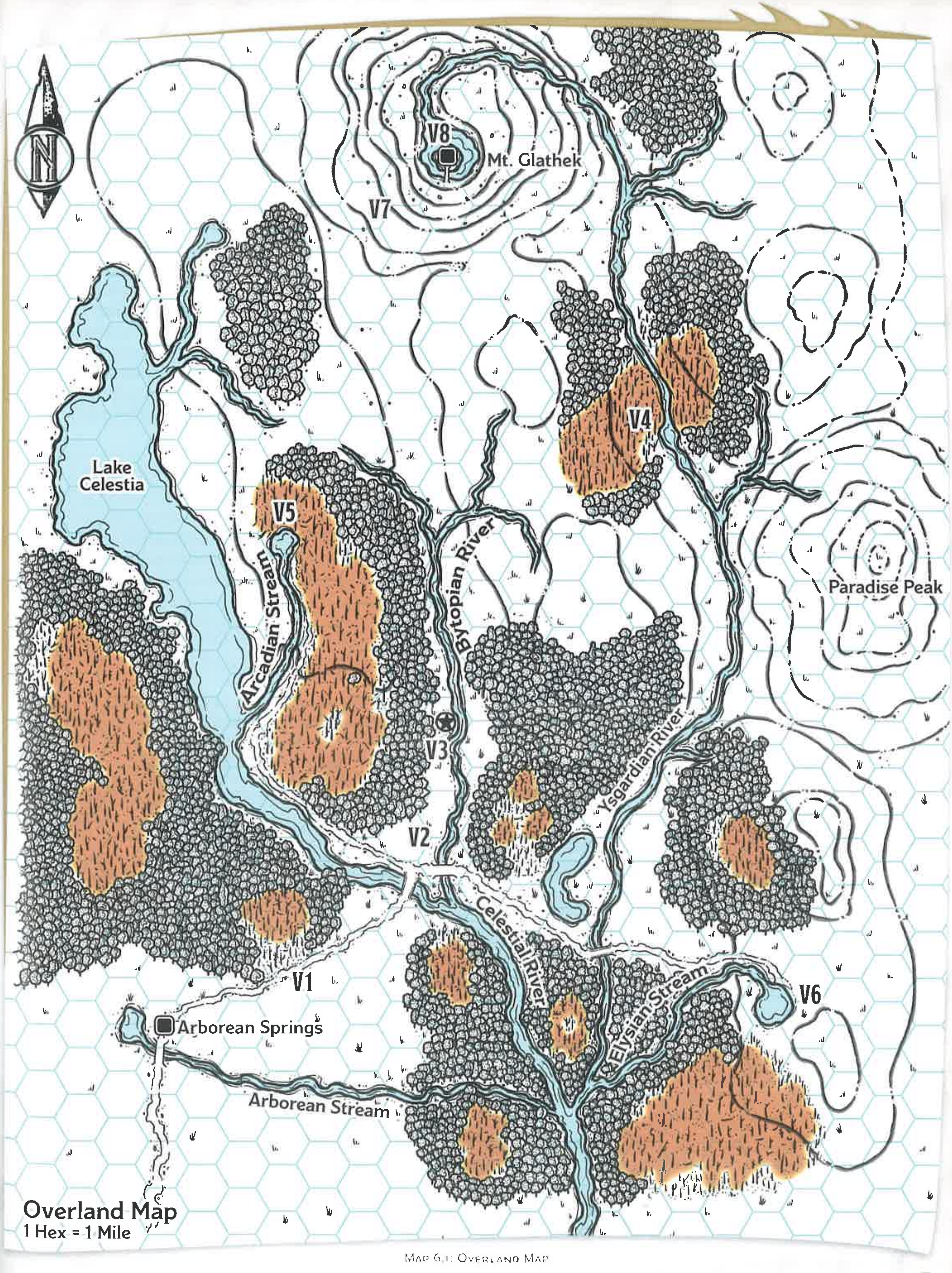
Stage 1. The characters go from Arborean Springs along the road (area V1) to Godshead Crossing (area V2). The good road allows them to choose any travel pace for this 8-mile stage.

Stage 2. The group travels from Godshead Crossing (area V2) to Mount Glathek (area V7). The western route, along the Bytopian River valley, takes the characters 14 miles through mountainous terrain, forcing them to travel at a Slow pace. They'll pass the Headless Statue (area V3) on the way. The eastern route, along the Ysgardian River valley, runs 27 miles through hilly terrain, allowing the characters to travel at a Normal or Slow pace. They'll have to deal with a wildfire (area V4) before reaching the mountain.

Stage 3. Climbing Mount Glathek (area V7) to the vale (area V8) involves a 3-mile journey up the mountainside at a Slow pace.

V1: Arborean Road

> Your journey from Arborean Springs leads you along a smooth road heading northeast, skirting the edge of a forest. A plume of thick smoke a few miles ahead of you signals the presence of a raging forest fire along your path, and smoke stings your nostrils.
>
> About three miles into your journey, the source of the smoke becomes clear: flames dance in the trees perhaps half a mile to the north. A charred wagon smolders in the middle of the road ahead, with no sign of life.


Overland Map
1 Hex = 1 Mile
N
V1
V2
V3
V4
V5
V6
V7
V8
Mt. Glathek
Lake Celestia
Paradise Peak
Arboreal Springs
Arcadian Stream
Bytopian River
Ysgardian River
Celestial River
Elysian Stream
Arborean Stream
Arborean Springs

Map 6.1: Overland Map

As the characters come closer, they notice skeletal humanoid corpses lying on the ground near the burned wagon. If they come within 10 feet of the bodies, the corpses reveal themselves to be monsters: four **Flaming Skeletons** and two **Flameskulls** that fight the characters.

The wagon and its goods are burned almost beyond recognition. As a Study action, a character can examine the wreckage and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the character deduces that the wagon carried bolts of woolen fabric. There is no sign of the animals that pulled the wagon.

V2: Godshead Crossing

> Just across a sturdy stone bridge, the road from Arborean Springs meets another road and comes to an end. The land is blackened and scarred by wildfires, but three things stand out. The first is a granite head the size of a wagon on the ground, gazing skyward. The second is the remains of a farmer's market clustered near the stone head, now only broken beams and crumbling ash. Finally, clusters of flame-colored flowers grow through the ashes here and there, particularly near the stone head.

The head, broken from the colossal statue at area V3, depicts Ozzadraz the Conqueror, a githyanki. Deep gouges from massive claws pierce the stone head on either side. As a Study action, a character can examine the claw marks and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check. On a success, the character recognizes that an unnaturally massive bird of prey made the scrapes.

Dragoneye Flowers

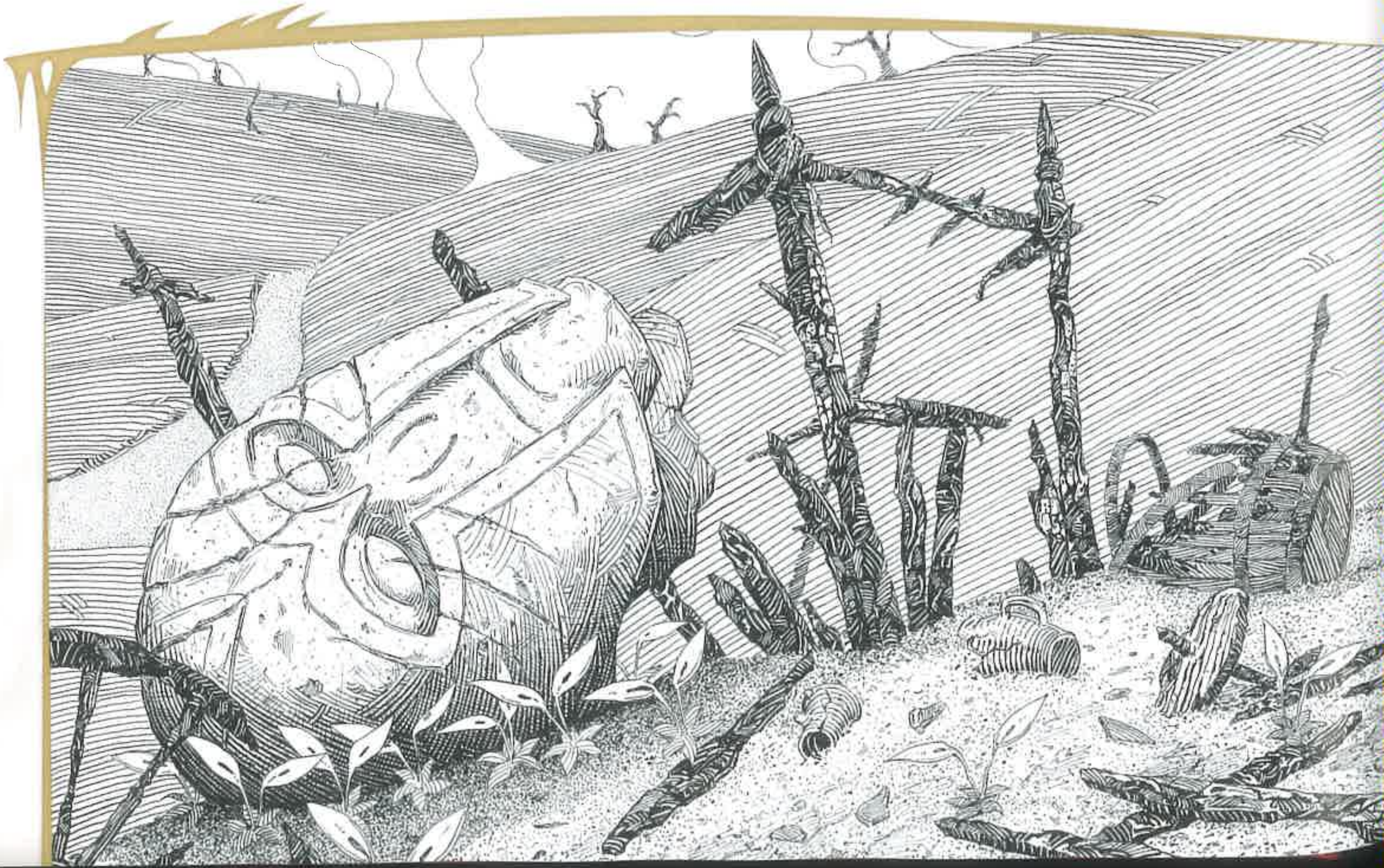
The flowers are dragoneye flowers. The Burning Circle members believe that when dragoneye flowers bloom, it is time for Xabazhut to return to his slumber (see "Nature Lovers"). These flowers have slender petals like tongues of flame surrounding bright yellow centers, and the flowers' oblong, black pistils resemble the slitted pupils of dragons.

A crushed dragoneye flower produces sparks that can start a fire; the flower functions as a Tinderbox with a single use. A picked flower retains its potency for 1d4 + 3 days.

V3: Headless Statue

> As you crest a hill, you discover an ancient monument. A headless granite sculpture of an armored figure holding an enormous sword looms over the surrounding land, over fifty feet tall. Cracked flakes of faded pigments speckle the stone like fungus.

The monument was a likeness of Ozzadraz, the githyanki commander who once ruled this land.



The head rests 3 miles south at area V2, where it was deposited after being broken off the body.

Attack from Above

The mountains are the hunting grounds for a **Roc** that is none too pleased that the forests are going up in flames—even though it happily hunts prey fleeing the fires. Its primary motivation is finding food; it is unlikely to fight to the death. Its nest lies near the top of Paradise Peak to the east. It initiates combat as soon as it spots one of the characters.

After seeing the roc, characters who successfully identified the claw marks on the statue's head at Godshead Crossing (area V2) recognize that this massive creature is responsible for damaging the statue, likely having mistaken it for prey.

V4: Ysgardian Wildfire

> Following the river toward its source is relatively easy—until you find the valley blocked by a raging wildfire. The forest grew close to the water here, and blazing trees have fallen, spanning the river and spreading flames on both sides.

The fire has spread through much of the valley. Characters must choose if they want to go around or through the fire.

Going Around

Skirting the wildfire by land involves moving into mountainous terrain and adding several extra miles to the characters' trip. About one hour into the journey, the characters encounter a group of fiery monsters—three **Fire Elementals** and five **Smoke Mephits**—that emerge from the flames to fight them.

If the characters are able to keep the entire party aloft for 2 miles of travel, they could travel over the fire instead. For every hour a creature spends in the air above the wildfire, it makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains 1 Exhaustion level from exposure to the heat and smoke.

Going Through

The portion of the valley containing the wildfire is considered the area of an inferno (see the "Hazards" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

OTHER WILDFIRES

Other fires rage throughout this region. If the characters choose a route that takes them into or near another wildfire, use the guidelines in area V4 to decide how the flames affect them.

V5: Arcadian Springs

> Wildfires have engulfed the forest, spreading for miles across the mountainsides and choking the sky with smoke. Raging fires burn right down to the edges of a beautiful alpine lake that measures about a half-mile across. At the north end of the lake, fire has almost entirely consumed a wood-and-stone structure.

Arcadian Springs was a resort that sought to profit off the healthful properties of the area's waters and natural beauty. The guests, proprietors, and staff have long since fled the resort.

Source of the Flames

If the characters linger here, looking for people trapped in the fire or otherwise exploring, they might draw the attention of the wildfires' source: the dragon Xabazhut (**Young Red Dragon**).

Don't use this encounter if the characters have already fought Xabazhut elsewhere. The dragon tries to remain hidden in the smoky air until he can breathe fire down on the party from above. If the dragon realizes the characters survived, he stays and fights them until he becomes Bloodied; then he returns to his lair to recover.

V6: Elysian Springs

> Beside a small alpine lake, an elegant mansion stands untouched by wildfire. A handful of armed people patrol around the building, keeping a nervous watch on the fires to the south and the sky overhead.

Elysian Springs is a luxury resort that attracts rich clients who seek to relax in beautiful surroundings. The fires have not yet reached it, but the mansion is mostly evacuated. Those who remain are staff members attempting to protect the property from looters and, if possible, from the spreading fires.

These staff members consist of eleven human **Guards** who are Indifferent to the characters. They have no interest in fighting the characters or the dragon. The staff members hesitate to allow the characters inside the resort, but a character can try to persuade the staff to allow them to rest here. As an Influence action, the character makes a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, the staff allow the characters to rest here as long as they need. On a failure, they allow the characters to complete only a Short Rest here.

V7: Mount Glathek

> Your destination juts above the surrounding mountains like a jagged tooth. No flames have touched these mountains, which are covered with lush vegetation and colorful wildflowers. Wisps of white smoke or steam rise from the peak, in contrast to the black wildfire smoke hanging over the valleys to the south.

The characters face one significant obstacle on their ascent up the mountain: a sheer cliff they must scale. Climbing the cliff requires each character to succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. If the characters rope themselves together, they can instead make a group check, succeeding as a group if at least half of them succeed on the check. Each character who fails the check—or every character, in the case of a failed group check—falls 60 feet.

V8: Forbidden Vale

> Your ascent ends at a broad caldera filled with a steaming lake. An ancient ziggurat stands on an island in the lake's center, connected to the south shore by a long stone bridge. Vegetation grows in neat rows on the ziggurat's three tiers. Canals flow around each tier and cascade down to the lower tiers in waterfalls that create clouds of spray.

Descending to the edge of the lake is a trivial matter. On reaching the water's edge, the characters notice, strewn along the lake bed, thousands of bones crusted with mineral deposits. Many of the bones appear to have come from various humanoid creatures.

Lake of Bones

The Lake of Bones is a hot spring 50 feet deep. Any creature that enters the scalding lake for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in the water takes 11 (2d10) Fire damage. Being underwater doesn't grant Resistance to this Fire damage.

Hidden Entrance. A character who swims to the bottom of the scalding lake beneath the bridge and takes a Search action can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a successful check, the character discovers a hidden underwater tunnel leading to the dragon's lair (area G14). The tunnel measures 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 200 feet long.

Stone Bridge

The bridge is 20 feet wide, 30 feet high, and 250 feet long. It spans the lake from its southern shore to the first tier of the gardens. Stone statues of red dragons flank both ends of the bridge. Wisps of steam rising from the lake sometimes create the impression that the dragons are moving, but they are ordinary statues.

Gardens of Xabazhut

External stairs provide access to all three garden tiers as shown on maps 6.2, 6.4, and 6.5. The front entrance leads to area G1 on map 6.2. A hidden entrance in the lake leads to Xabazhut's lair, shown on map 6.3. The roof of the top tier is a vibrant garden with no walkways or inhabitants.

Garden Features

Each tier of the stone ziggurat is 20 feet tall. Earthquakes have weakened the structure in the centuries since it was built, knocking down walls and obstructing passageways. Other general features are summarized below.

Astral Lift

A 10-foot-diameter shaft runs through the center of the ziggurat, from the dragon's underground lair in area G14 to areas G9, G19, and G25. The shaft is infused with energy from the Astral Plane that magically interferes with movement and the Material Plane's gravity. An object in the shaft that is neither worn nor carried hangs motionless in the air, and ammunition and thrown weapons stop moving when they enter the shaft. A creature in the shaft has a Fly Speed (in feet) equal to 5 times its Intelligence score and can hover. As soon as the creature moves outside the boundaries of the shaft, the effect ends. The shaft extends to the ceiling of area G25, 15 feet above the floor, and to the surface of the lake in area G14. It passes through the Antechamber of Sacred Repose (area G9) and the Antechamber of Unearthly Delights (area G19). All chambers connected to the Astral lift are warm and humid thanks to the hot water below.

Ceilings

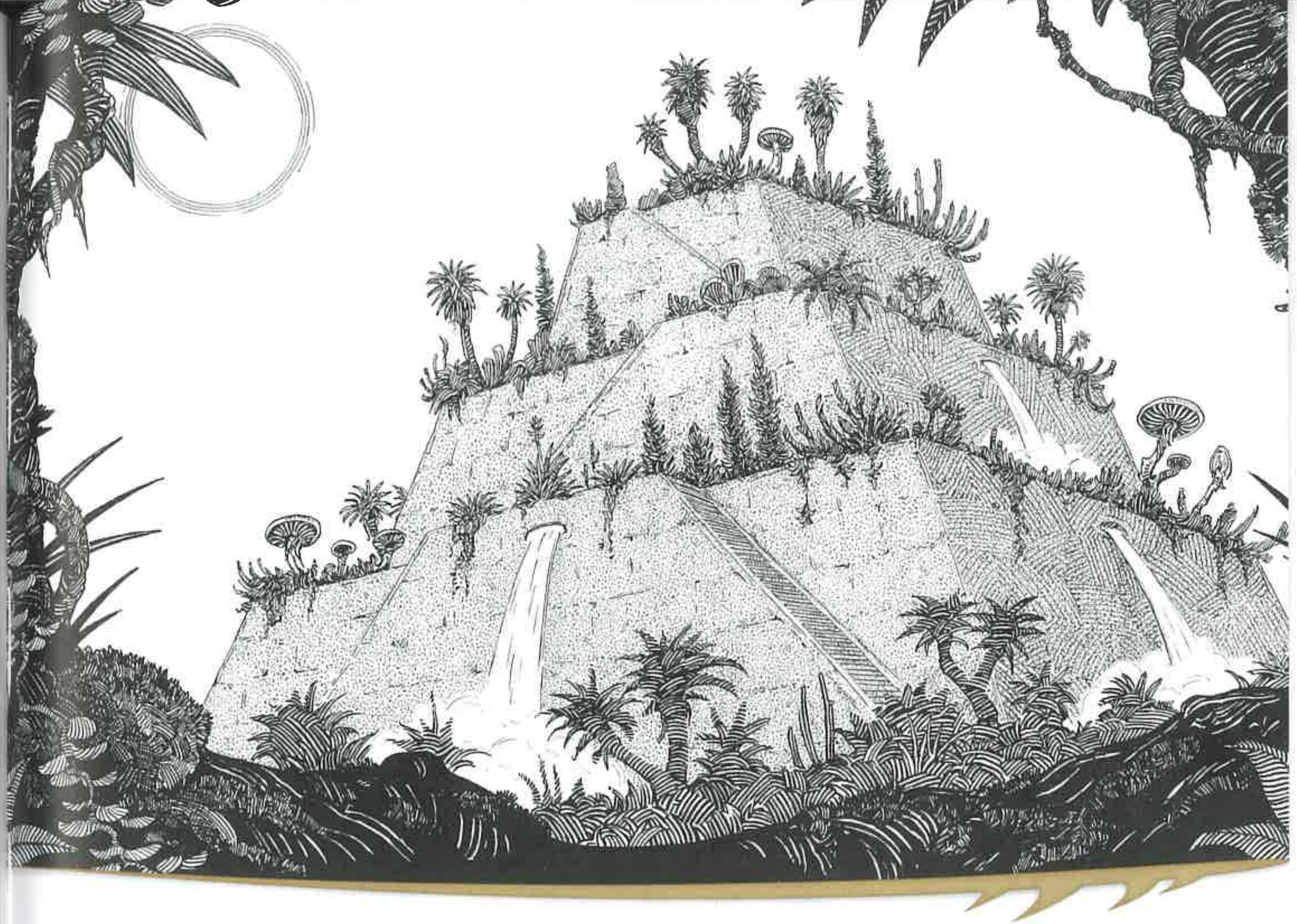
Unless stated otherwise, ceilings in rooms are 15 feet high, and those in passages are 10 feet high.

Doors

Doors in the gardens are made of stone.

Extraplanar Plants

Several plants in the gardens originate in the Outer Planes. As a Study action, a character can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check. On a success, the character knows the plane of existence



where a plant originated. If the check's total is at least 20, the character also knows the plant's properties and effects. The plants can't survive more than one day outside the gardens on the Material Plane. One gallon of water from its native plane sustains a plant for 1d4 weeks; pools in the Astral garden (area G20) contain such water.

Lighting

Windows (see below) and broken walls allow daylight into rooms on the edges of the ziggurat, filling them with Bright Light in the daytime. The lift chambers on the second and third tiers (areas G19 and G25) are filled with Bright Light in daylight hours, while the lift chamber on the first tier (area G9) is filled with Dim Light from the shaft above.

Water

Pools and irrigation canals are 3 feet deep.

Windows

Window shafts allow daylight into every room alongside the outer walls of the gardens. These windows are 3 feet square; are set near the top of each tier; and slant downward into the room, opening about 10 feet above the floor.

Tier 1 Locations

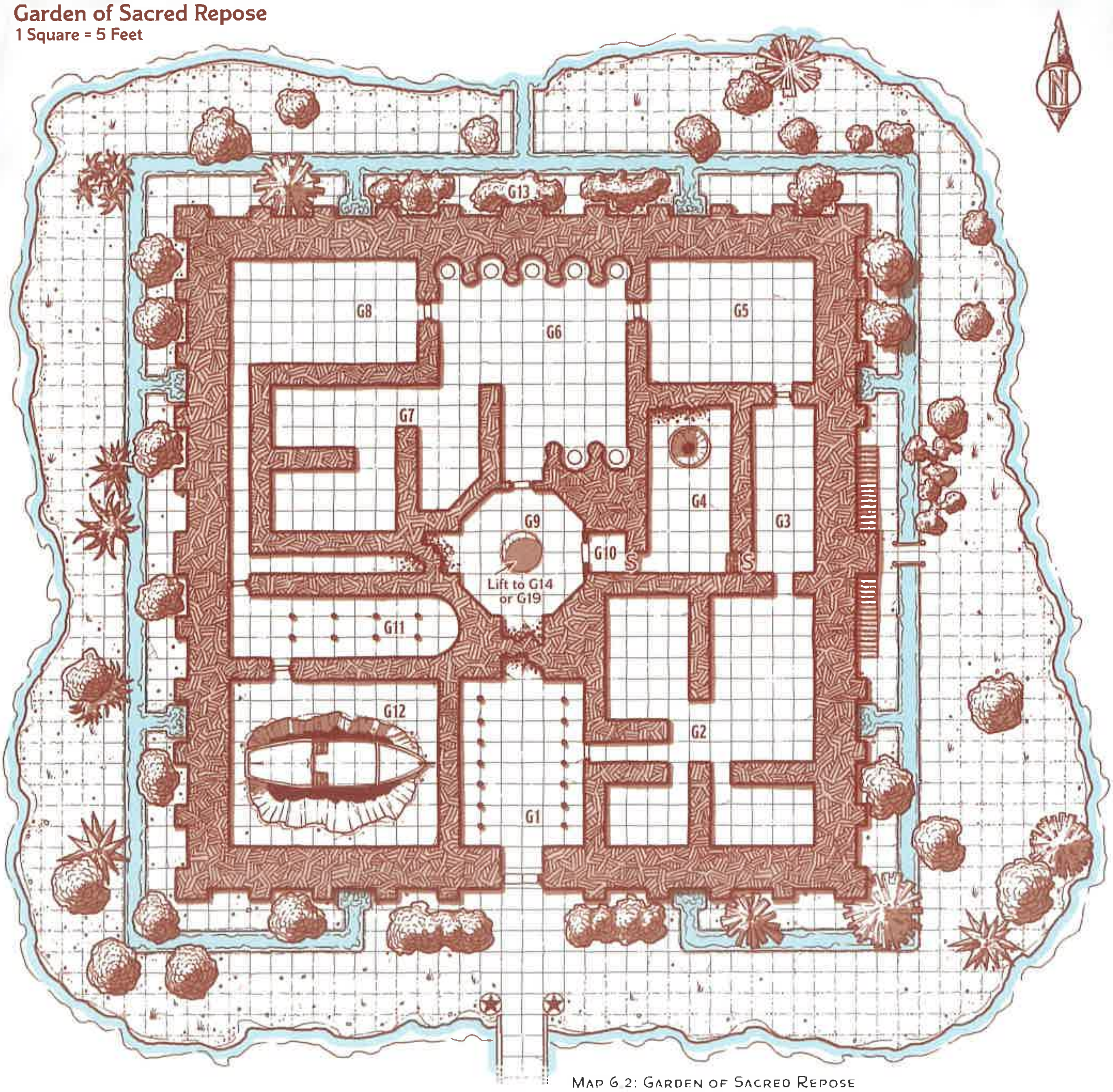
The first tier, the ground floor of the gardens, appears on map 6.2. This tier is called the Garden of Sacred Repose.

G1: Hall of the Dragon

> This wide, vaulted hall has a row of pillars on either side, supporting elegant arches and framing colorful frescoes on the east and west walls. Rubble from the remains of immense stone doors lies to the north. A smaller, intact stone door leads out to the east.

The fresco on the west wall depicts an enormous red dragon exhaling fire over a forested landscape. Several burning villages appear in distinct scenes along the wall's length.

The fresco on the east wall shows an armored knight on the back of a red dragon flying across the landscape. This pair appears in multiple scenes along the wall, with the dragon's wings in a different position in each scene. The land below the knight and dragon is depicted as a raging inferno.



Map 6.2: Garden of Sacred Repose

G2: Hall of Desolation

> Four chambers branch from a central hub. Frescoes cover the walls of every chamber. In both southern rooms, an obsidian sarcophagus stands upright against the south wall. Ornate carvings of the sarcophagi's githyanki occupants adorn the lids.

The frescoes in these chambers depict four githyanki building and tending the gardens, conquering the surrounding region, and feasting in celebration. An enormous red dragon is visible in many scenes, soaring triumphantly through the sky or coiled atop a great hoard of plundered treasure. Ozzadraz appears in the frescoes of the northeast chamber, and Zumzn in the northwest chamber.

Sarcophagi. The sarcophagus in the southwest holds the remains of Kh'krai, and the one in the southeast holds the remains of Suthket. They were buried with honor despite their rebellion against Ozzadraz. Touching either sarcophagus casts the *Speak with Dead* spell, targeting the corpse within. The carved face on the sarcophagus animates as if it were the speaking corpse.

Both githyanki died centuries ago, so their knowledge of the gardens is outdated. They act belligerent but answer questions honestly. They also warn of curses that will befall anyone who disturbs their remains. These warnings are empty threats. The sarcophagi contain only the mummified corpses of the githyanki.

DYSON LOGOS

G3: Passage of Stars

> The floor of this hall curves upward to become the walls and the ceiling, forming a cylindrical corridor fifteen feet in diameter. The surfaces are inky black but studded with tiny lights like stars in the night sky.

The "stars" embedded in the surfaces of the hall are tiny chips of glowing stone harvested from a mountain in Elysium. They can be pried out using Jeweler's Tools or Mason's Tools, at a rate of 1d8 stones per minute (to a maximum of 300 stones). Each one sheds Dim Light in a 5-foot radius and can be sold for 5 SP.

Secret Door. A character who has a Passive Perception of 15+ or who searches the west wall for secret doors and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the curving wall just west of the southern entrance is less smooth than the other walls, holding stair-like footholds. They go about four feet up the side of the hall. The space above them is a secret door that opens at the slightest touch. On the other side, a few stairs lead down into the Well of Repose (area G4).

G4: Well of Repose

> The walls of this hidden chamber are lined with frescoes of grim githyanki warriors. A silvery sky studded with stars swirls above them. At the north end of the room, a low wall encircles a well. The floor behind it is strewn with rubble from damage to the wall and the ceiling above.

The frescoes here memorialize the githyanki warriors who fought alongside the gardens' founders in their ill-fated revolt against the lich-queen. The githyanki exiles would toss coins into the well periodically to honor them.

Secret Doors. Any character can easily notice the door to area G3, which opens at the slightest touch. A character who has a Passive Perception of 15+ or a character who searches the west wall for secret doors and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the secret door to area G10 and the latch to open it.

Well. The well is 10 feet wide and 100 feet deep. The water it once held drained out after an earthquake, and the now-dry passage deep below eventually connects to the Underdark. The coins that once lay at the bottom of the well have been plundered; see area G10 for their fate.

A Hostile **Behir** hides about 20 feet down the well. Angered at the proximity of Xabazhut to its territory, the creature is scouting the gardens to determine if it can kill the dragon. It remains in the well and waits for the characters to leave, but if the characters search the well or attempt to rest here, it fights them. The behir is narrow enough to fit through doorways and 5-foot-wide tunnels, but they are Difficult Terrain for the creature.

G5: Garden of Chaos

> The walls of this cavernous chamber are barely visible. The room holds a scene of chaos: a river cascades through a bottomless abyss, suddenly transforming into a ribbon of iron. A nearby boulder blooms into fire as lightning scatters from it in every direction. Constant chaotic motion and noise assail your senses.

The githyanki exiles used this simulation to practice the combat skills needed to battle githzerai on the Plane of Limbo. An infusion of energy from Limbo makes the room permanently behave like that plane. In particular, a creature here can attempt to move or alter objects or to stabilize an area as described in the "Limbo" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Characters can use these techniques to create a safe pathway to the room's exit.

Despite appearing to be a bottomless abyss, the room has a floor creatures can move across. However, a creature that moves across the floor takes 2 (1d4) Psychic damage for every 5 feet it moves, as the visual dissonance of moving across an abyss tears at the creature's mind.

G6: Garden of the Guardian

> An enormous serpentine horror slithers between the north and south walls of this room, which are lined with massive trees carved from green marble. In the alcoves between them, a variety of objects—weapons, a shield, an urn, and the like—rest on pedestals. Green and blue tiles on the floor suggest a river flowing through a fertile delta.

A **Spirit Naga** called Hate's Embrace dwells in this grand hall, placed here by Ozzadraz long ago to guard the githyanki exiles' most sacred objects. The naga resents and fears Xabazhut and Ozzadraz, but with the dragon in its lair (or out spreading wildfires around the countryside) and the githyanki leader in suspended animation, the naga enjoys unimpeded access to the first tier of the gardens.

The naga captured the last party of adventurers who came here—a group hired by Ginder Nanik in Arborean Springs to scout the gardens for exploitable resources—and slowly and torturously transformed them into yuan-ti. These creatures live in the servants' quarters (area G7) and come to the naga's aid when called.

Sacred Objects. Each of the alcoves on the north and south walls contains an object with sacred significance to the githyanki.

From west to east on the north wall, the five objects are as follows:

Elaborately decorated Shield covered with silver filigree (worth 250 GP)
Ornate Breastplate with several large gemstones embedded in the decoration (worth 750 GP)
Urn carved from gleaming red jade (worth 750 GP) and containing the ashes of a red dragon (worth an additional 250 GP to the right buyer)
Sword of Vengeance (Greatsword), whose hilt is carved with an angry demonic face
Ceremonial Dagger with a gold handle (worth 25 GP)

From west to east on the south wall, the two objects are as follows:

Bronze helmet with mother-of-pearl inlay (worth 250 GP)
Periapt of Health

G7: Servants' Quarters

> Four serpentine creatures with humanoid upper bodies mill about restlessly, and straw mats and personal tokens lie strewn across the floor. Murals showing humans laboring in the gardens decorate the walls of these three connected chambers.

Four **Yuan-ti Malisons (Type 3)** lair in these chambers, which once belonged to humans conscripted to help the githyanki build and maintain the gardens. The yuan-ti were humans themselves only a few years ago, when Ginder Nanik in Arborean Springs hired them to scout the gardens for resources the merchant might exploit. But the naga in area G6 captured them and transformed them into their current forms through sinister rites and excruciating torture.

The yuan-ti have no memories of their previous existence and serve the naga unwaveringly. They rush out of this area to aid the naga when they notice combat or a cry for help.

Personal Effects. Among the items strewn around the chamber floors are things that point to the yuan-ti's previous existence, including boots, pants, and a broken wax seal belonging to Ginder Nanik: a stylized depiction of water flowing down over rocks, like the hot springs of the region.

G8: Garden of the Hated Foe

> Mushrooms, moss, and other growths cover the floor of this cavernous room. A wooden rack on the south wall holds five slender silver circlets. A patch of yellowish mold spreads around and covers the rack.

The mold is one patch of yellow mold, described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. It grows all over the rack, so touching any of the silver circlets causes the mold to discharge spores.

A character who dons a circlet activates a phantasm—a training exercise for the githyanki exiles. The character observes a **Mind Flayer** and a **Cyclops Warrior** in the center of the room, with the illithid hovering in the air above and behind the cyclops.

Characters who aren't wearing circlets can't affect or perceive these creatures—illusions that exist only in the mind of the character wearing the circlet. Any other characters who don circlets perceive the same illusions. When the characters initiate combat, or after 1 minute, the monsters fight characters wearing circlets. Their damaging actions deal Psychic damage rather than the type the creatures depicted would normally deal, but they are otherwise fully real as far as the characters wearing circlets are concerned. The monsters can be damaged or destroyed by those characters' actions.

A character can't pierce the illusion while wearing a circlet, but simply taking off the circlet causes the illusion to disappear for that character. The illusory monsters can't harm or otherwise affect characters who aren't wearing circlets.

The circlets' magic functions only in this room. Each is worth 25 GP.

G9: Antechamber of Sacred Repose

> This chamber's warm humidity is oppressive. Passages that once led out to the west and south are collapsed and impassible. Four beautiful frescoes on the walls between exits feature scenes of conquest, each lorded over by a githyanki warrior mounted on an enormous red dragon. A column of shimmering air connects large shafts in the floor and ceiling.

The Astral lift is described in "Garden Features." The lift connects to the dragon's lair 50 feet below (area G14) and to the Antechamber of Unearthly Delights 20 feet above (area G19).

G10: Raiders

> This small chamber serves as the final resting place for two skeletal corpses welded in place against the eastern wall with a blob of precious metal.

Two would-be thieves entered the gardens from the Underdark by way of the well (area G4), after collecting the coins from the bottom of the pit in that chamber. They barely made any progress into the ziggurat before Xabazhut emerged from the Astral lift, discovered their presence, and destroyed them and their treasure.

Melted Metal. Given 10 minutes of prying with a Crowbar or similar tool, characters can remove the metal from both the wall and the corpses. A mix of copper, silver, and gold, the blob weighs 50 pounds and is worth 250 GP.

Secret Door. Once the melted metal is removed, the secret door leading to the well (area G4) becomes obvious. Finding the hidden latch, however, requires a character to take a Search action and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

G11: Shrine of the Queen

> At the end of a long, pillared hall, a stone sculpture depicts an emaciated githyanki sitting on a grand throne. Above the sculpture, a dragon skull hangs suspended by three chains. A fresco on the west wall depicts the same figure, pointing a withered finger as four githyanki depart from her presence, their heads dropped in shame.

In this shrine, the githyanki paid penitent homage to Vlaakith, the dread githyanki ruler they rebelled against, who banished them as punishment for their insurrection. The sense of malice in this room is palpable. A powerful curse protects the sculpture from any who would deface it.

Dragon Skull. The skull belonged to a sizable red dragon.

Sculpture. The sculpture of Vlaakith wears a spiked crown and carries a dragon-headed scepter. Two sculpted dragon heads snake from behind the throne. A creature who touches the statue, hits it with an attack roll, or otherwise tries to damage the statue makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. At the same time, an Invisible sensor appears before the statue's face, showing Xabazhut the room as if he had cast *Clairvoyance*. The Large statue has AC 17, HP 38, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage.

G12: Garden of the Conqueror

> A magnificent, dragon-prowed ship spans this large chamber. Instead of sails, apparatuses resembling dragon wings lie against the ship's hull. A sculpted sarcophagus rests on the deck. A deep pit surrounds the vessel, and wisps of steam drift in the air.

This is the lair of the **Githyanki Knight** Ozzadraz the Conqueror, ruler of the exiled githyanki who built the gardens. He lies in the sarcophagus under the effect of the *Sequester* spell, which makes him Invisible and keeps him in suspended animation. The spell ends if Ozzadraz takes any damage or if Xabazhut takes damage while within the ziggurat. Ozzadraz responds by confronting the characters and demanding their obeisance, fighting them if they refuse.

Dragon-Prowed Ship. This magical Airship rests on a pillar rising up from the dragon's lair (area G14) and is equipped with two Ballistae. Activating the ship's magic and launching it into the air requires Attunement to its throne-like helm. Ozzadraz is currently attuned to it.

Sarcophagus. The sarcophagus's creators painted it to look like a red-scaled, bipedal draconic figure wearing black armor and carrying a silver sword. Ozzadraz rests in suspended animation within it. The sarcophagus has the magical property of casting the *Sequester* spell on any willing creature inside it when the lid is closed. The targeted creature chooses the condition that will end the spell.

Steaming Pit. The room is Lightly Obscured by dense steam rising from the 50-foot-deep pit that surrounds the Airship.

Treasure. Ozzadraz wears a suit of black Plate Armor fashioned to look like the night sky and inlaid with topaz and blue spinel gems, worth 6,000 GP total. He also carries a *Horn of Blasting*.

G13: Rose Garden

> Three rose hedges grow along this terrace on the north side of the first tier. Their flowers are red as heart's blood, and their perfume is cloyingly sweet.

These hedges are Arborean roses, transplanted from the plane of Arborea. The first time a creature comes within 15 feet of one of these hedges, the creature makes a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the next time the creature notices a creature that isn't one of its allies, it becomes besotted with that creature and has the Charmed condition for 1 hour.

Sleeping Concoction. The Burning Circle's sleeping concoction requires three Arborean rose blossoms (see "Nature Lovers").

Xabazhut's Lair

The dragon's lair is accessible through the Astral lift in area G9 and the pit in area G12. A hidden tunnel in the Lake of Bones (see area V8) leads to the hot spring in the lair. The lair is shown on map 6.3.

G14: Garden of the Dragon

> Thick steam from a boiling spring suffuses this hot, volcanic cavern and rises through a hole in the ceiling above. Magnificent treasures gleam among a pile of coins heaped around a square granite pillar. Near the pillar lounges a mighty red dragon.

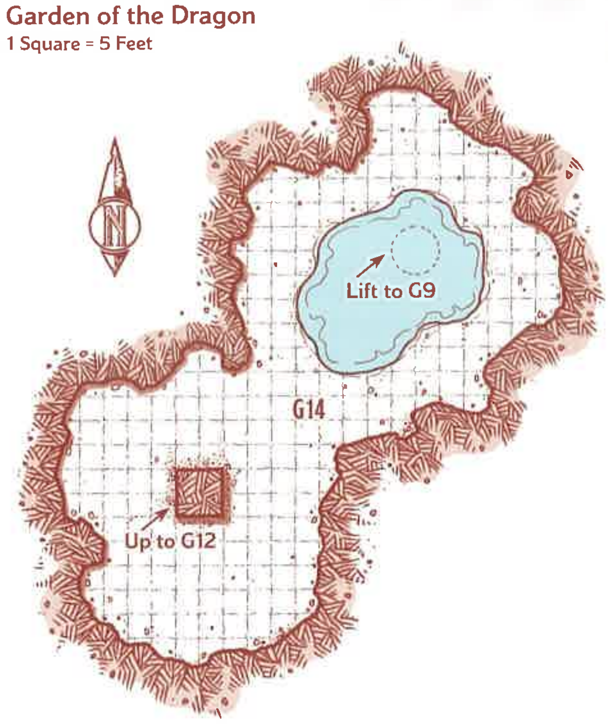
This area is Xabazhut's lair and holds his hoard, plundered from the towns of the Paradise Mountains region. Xabazhut is a **Young Red Dragon** who wants to burn the area and grow his hoard, as his predecessor did. He emerges from his lair from time to time to start new wildfires, but he spends most of every day here in his lair.

As soon as Xabazhut takes damage, Ozzadraz awakens from his suspended animation on the Airship (area G12)—if he hasn't already—and hurries to the dragon's aid. He calls for the dragon to fly up toward the ceiling of the cavern, allowing the githyanki to teleport onto his back. If Bloodied, Xabazhut attempts to bargain or compromise to escape with his life.

Astral Lift. The Astral lift, which connects to several chambers above, is described in "Garden Features."

Hot Spring. Steam from the spring makes this area Lightly Obscured. The spring is 50 feet deep and connects to the Lake of Bones via a hidden entrance. A character who swims to the bottom of the spring and takes a Search action can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character discovers a hidden underwater tunnel leading to area V8 (see "Lake of Bones" above).

Any creature that enters the scalding spring for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in the water takes 11 (2d10) Fire damage. Being underwater doesn't grant Resistance to this Fire damage.



Map 6.3: Garden of the Dragon

Pillar. The pillar supports Ozzadraz's Airship (area G12), 50 feet above the cavern floor.

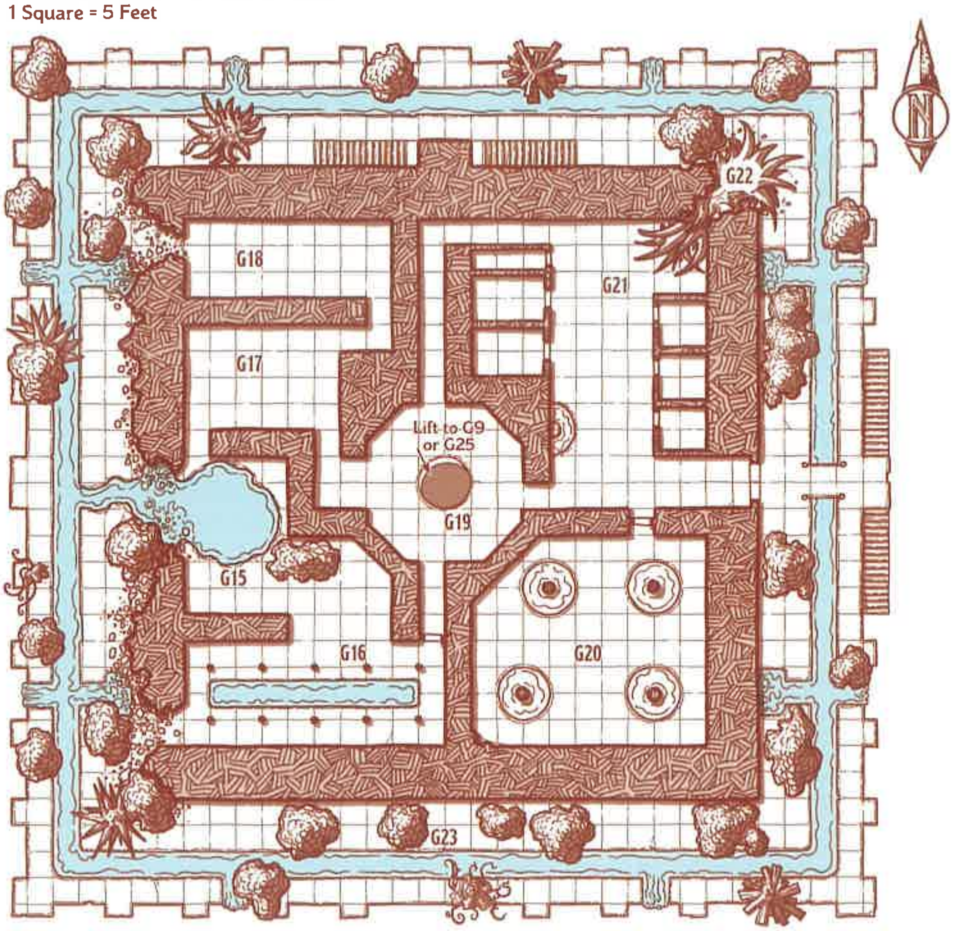
Treasure. Xabazhut sleeps on his hoard, which includes the following treasures:

300 PP, 4,500 GP, 15,000 SP, and 4,500 CP
Three coral stones (worth 100 GP each)
Two jet stones (worth 100 GP each)
Two carnelians (worth 50 GP each)
Three onyx stones (worth 50 GP each)
Seven hematite stones (worth 10 GP each)
Three obsidian stones (worth 10 GP each)
Ancient lyre whose arms are capped with dragon heads made of gold (worth 250 GP)
Jade orb (worth 100 GP) engraved in Infernal with the name of Nessus
Cube of Summoning
Instrument of the Bards (Doss lute)
Silvered Weapon (Spear)

Tier 2 Locations

The second tier of the gardens, shown on map 6.4, is called the Garden of Unearthly Delights. It is the most verdant of the garden tiers, especially since a coven of **Green Hags** from the Feywild took up residence here to serve Xabazhut and revel in the dragon's reign of terror. The hags lair in a bog that has formed in one of the ziggurat's rooms (area G15), but the characters might encounter them anywhere on this tier.

Garden of Unearthly Delights
1 Square = 5 Feet



Map 6.4: Garden of Unearthly Delights

The coven consists of the following hags:

Deathkiss, a male **Green Hag** with a tawny mane like a lion's
Demondream, a female **Green Hag** with the hooves and horns of a goat
Murderbliss, a genderless reptilian **Green Hag** with scaled skin and horns like a red dragon's

The three hags bicker incessantly with one another, but they also finish each other's sentences and coordinate their activities as if they were a single creature. They refer to the chimera in area G16 as their "son."

The hags roam around this tier. Though Indifferent to the characters, as allies of Xabazhut, they interfere with whatever the characters do. If engaged in combat, the hags try to escape and regroup in the menagerie (area G21), where they can call on the creatures there to aid them. Each hag carries an iron key that opens all the pens in the menagerie (area G21).

If the adventurers display enough strength, the hags might believe the characters could actually slay Xabazhut. In that case, the characters might be able to convince the hags to betray the dragon by revealing the location of Xabazhut's lair (area G14), the location of the plants needed for the sleeping concoction (areas G13, G20, and G24), or other information that might help the characters.

The hags offer to exchange this information for each adventurer's favorite childhood memory. If the characters agree to this bargain, the hags siphon the memories from their heads with a tiny pipette and deposit them into small glass Vials. A character who drinks the contents of a Vial gains the memory it contains (regardless of whose memory it was originally).

The last thing any of the hags wants is to face a group of powerful adventurers in combat. As soon as a hag takes damage, the hag flees, hoping to interfere with the characters' activities elsewhere on this tier.

G15: Bog of the Green Hags

> A murky grove grows through a shattered chamber open to the outside. A waterfall pours through the collapsed ceiling and into the misty bog. Butterflies flit through the branches of trees draped in moss and vines, and frogs croak and chirp among the snaking roots.

Natural deterioration has transformed this former Feywild garden into a bog, and three **Green Hags** (see above) now lair here. When alerted to the approach of intruders, the hags use magic to disguise themselves as dryads and pretend to be bound to the trees in this chamber.

If combat begins in this room, the **Chimera** in area G16 comes to the hags' aid immediately.

Waterfall. The ceiling once contained a canal that channeled water from the third tier to the second. Now the water falls straight into the room, creating the bog.

Treasure. Submerged in the bog is a human skeleton wearing an *Amulet of Proof against Detection and Location*. As a Search action, a character can comb through the bog and make a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character finds the amulet.

G16: Overgrown Garden

> Tall pillars decorated with painted reliefs are barely visible through curtains of ivy that climb toward the vaulted ceiling. Low shrubs and trees grow densely around a long central pool, and harsh bird cries pierce the air.

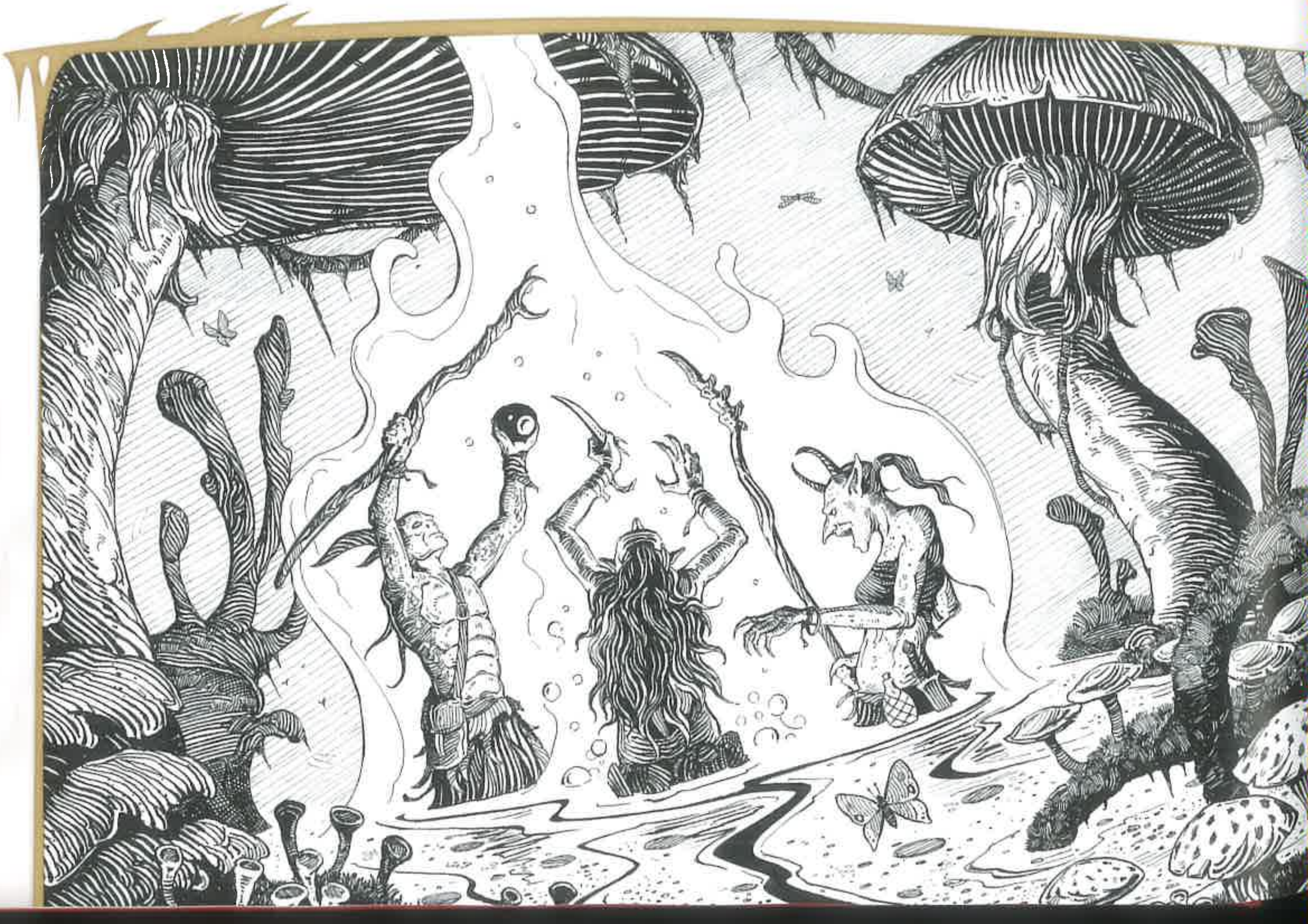
A **Chimera** dwells in this room, often lounging in the water or sunning itself in the southwest corner. The hags flatter it, feed it well, and present it with gifts to ensure its cooperation. It comes to the hags' aid if they are threatened within earshot of it.

Treasure. Concealed under lily pads in the western end of the pool lies the chimera's meager treasure: 42 GP, 30 SP, a red garnet worth 100 GP, and a simple gold bracelet worth 25 GP. The chimera stole the garnet from the manticores in area G18.

G17: The Hellbloom

> Falling water and birdsong echo through the ruined stone passages of this garden, mingled with eerie, distant animal calls. A prodigious flower blooms in the northwest corner. Its pale-yellow, ten-foot-tall stalk rises from a cluster of jagged leaves to support a head of three-foot petals.

This hellbloom flower, native to the Nine Hells, exudes a sweetly pleasant musk. The first time a creature comes within 5 feet of the hellbloom, the flower emits a cloud of noxious gas that duplicates the effect of the *Stinking Cloud* spell (spell save DC 15). Once the flower has emitted this gas, it can't do so again until the next dawn.



G18: Astral Reliefs

This chamber is the lair of three Hostile **Manticores** that grudgingly serve the hags in the bog (area G15). During the day, one manticore lurks in the lair while the other two travel around this tier of the gardens. All three monsters are here at night. Describe how many are present after describing the room as follows:

> Reliefs on the walls here depict githyanki going about their daily life beneath a silvery, star-studded sky. A row of text runs along the walls' middle, worn away in places or covered by spreading moss. The room reeks of rotting meat.

Monstrous Feud. The manticores fear the chimera in the overgrown garden (area G16) and hate it for stealing their treasure, a red garnet. The manticores become Friendly toward the characters if the characters destroy the chimera or return the gemstone.

Inscription. The text, written in the Gith language, is an ode to "the githyanki, lords of all lords" and "Vlaakith our queen, queen of the multiverse." It says nothing of significance, though near the end the author expresses regret for their "unwarranted rebellion" and "treasonous disregard for the sublime will" of the lich-queen.

G19: Antechamber of Unearthly Delights

> A fresco here depicts a gentle scene of a githyanki with a red dragon, resting in a green landscape with abundant plant growth. The githyanki holds a flower in her hand. A column of shimmering air connects large shafts in the floor and ceiling.

The Astral lift, which passes through this chamber, is described in "Garden Features." The lift connects 20 feet below to the Antechamber of Sacred Repose (area G9) and 20 feet above to the gardens' pinnacle (area G25).

G20: Astral Garden

> The rush of falling water resounds in this misty room. Four stone fountains each flow into a pool filled with a different color of water—ruby red, sapphire blue, fiery orange, and rich indigo. Many-colored lotuses float in the pools, their sweet fragrance borne on the silver mist.

LUKE EIDENSCHINK

This is a meditation and healing chamber. The gardens' builders created it to recall their home among the color pools of the Astral Plane and to nourish plants from the Outer Planes.

Arcadian Lotus Flowers. One lotus plant grows in each pool. These plants once grew in Arcadia, and their flowers' sweet aroma carries some of that plane's blessed vitality. A creature that spends the entirety of a Short or Long Rest in this chamber gains the following benefits at the end of the rest:

- All Exhaustion levels are removed from the creature.
- The Poisoned condition ends on the creature.
- The creature regains the maximum number of Hit Points for any Hit Point Die spent at the end of this rest.

Fountain Pools. The pools radiate magic. A character who interacts with the pools can take a Study action and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, the character deduces that each fountain magically draws nutrient-rich water from the Outer Planes, with the color of the pool matching the hue of an Astral color pool leading to that plane (see the "Astral Plane" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Water taken from a pool can sustain an extraplanar plant removed from the gardens, as shown on the Fountain Pools table (see "Extraplanar Plants"):

FOUNTAIN POOLS

Pool Color	Plane	Plant
Blue	Arborea	Arborean rose (G13)
Indigo	Ysgard	Godsvine (G23)
Orange	Elysium	Elysian cherry (G24)
Red	Nine Hells	Hellbloom (G17)

Sleeping Concoction. The Burning Circle's sleeping concoction requires two Arcadian lotus blossoms (see "Nature Lovers").

G21: Menagerie

> This chamber reeks of dung. Dense vegetation grows through the northeast corner, which has collapsed. To the southwest, a dragon-headed fountain splashes water into a basin. A large ornate mirror hangs on the wall above the fountain's spout. On the east and west, six cages constructed from heavy iron bars stand empty.

The mirror is a *Mirror of Life Trapping*, which contains the denizens of the menagerie. The hags know the command words for the mirror and use the mirror's cells to keep their monstrous pets.

Cages. The gates to the six cages are unlocked and squeal on rusty hinges. Straw lines the bottoms of the cages.

Mirror Menagerie. Nine of the mirror's extradimensional cells are occupied by monsters and people who foolishly ventured into the gardens in recent years, summarized on the Captives of the Mirror table.

If one of the **Green Hags** from G15 confronts adventurers here, the hag activates the mirror and frees the **Hydra** to create as much chaos as possible. Given the chance, the hag next frees the **Hill Giant**, promising that if the giant helps kill the adventurers, the hags will let the giant go free.

CAPTIVES OF THE MIRROR

Cell	Captive
1	Eblus (Medium **Druid**), an elf member of the Burning Circle from Arborean Springs, captured about three months ago and extremely bored
2	Serev (Medium **Noble**), a human who fled the destruction of Arcadian Springs and came here in a fury, seeking revenge against the dragon
3	**Owlbear**
4	**Troll**
5	**Hydra**
6	Gree (Small **Berserker**), a human who is Javek Horn's great-grandmother
7	**Hill Giant**
8	**Bulette**
9	**Grick Ancient**
10–12	Empty

G22: Overgrown Passage

A collapse in the northeast corner allows vegetation to grow through the wall and into the menagerie (area G21). The rubble and dense vegetation make the passage Difficult Terrain, and two vicious vines (see "Hazards" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) grow in the passage. These vines deal 11 (2d10) Piercing damage to creatures Grappled by them; the DC to avoid or escape their grip is 14.

G23: Heroes' Grapes

> Plump grapes hang in heavy bunches from vines along this terrace, their skins the burgundy hue of shed blood.

Five particularly large bunches of grapes hang on this godsvine from Ysgard. Eating one bunch of these grapes takes 1 minute and grants the effects of a *Potion of Heroism*.

Tier 3 Locations

The top tier of the gardens, which is shown on map 6.5, is called the Garden of Everflowing Springs. It holds the unending sources of the water that flows through the ziggurat, and it imprisons the genie responsible for keeping the water flowing.

G24: High Terrace

> The cherry trees here are in various states of bloom, with some covered in white blossoms and others boasting succulent fruit. The trees shed a sweet, otherworldly fragrance. Wandering around the terrace's edge is an enormous tree with a humanlike face and a fanged, humanoid skull embedded in its trunk.

The Neutral **Treant** is a reincarnation of Zumzn, the githyanki gardener who cultivated this place. The creature uses Zumzn's name but remembers nothing of its previous existence except that Zumzn tended these gardens. Zumzn's only goal is to protect the gardens. As long as it regards the adventurers as intruders and thus a potential threat, it is Hostile to them. But if convinced they don't pose a threat to the gardens, it becomes Indifferent.

Fruit of Life. Zumzn's trunk forks around a githyanki skull, and a heart-shaped fruit—the fruit of life—grows inside the skull. Zumzn can remove the fruit from the skull without harming itself, or someone can free the fruit after the treant's death. The first time a character takes a bite of the fruit, the character's physical age is reduced by 1d6 + 6 years, to a minimum of 13 years.

Elysian Cherry Trees. Elysian cherry trees line all four sides of the terrace and are the primary source of this region's miraculous health. A creature that eats a cherry from one of these trees is cured of all magical contagions, and the following conditions end on the creature: Blinded, Deafened, Paralyzed, and Poisoned. A creature can be cured in this way once per day. Once picked, the cherries lose their magic after 24 hours.

Sleeping Concoction. The fruit of life is an ingredient of the Burning Circle's sleeping concoction (see "Nature Lovers") and regrows in 2d4 days if Zumzn removes it willingly. The whole fruit is required to make the concoction that will return Xabazhut to his slumber.

G25: Everflowing Springs

> A palatial apartment crowns the gardens. Wide arches leave it open to the air, and tattered silks of many colors swoop from the vaulted ceiling, which is painted with images of clouds and air spirits. Four whispering streams flow continually from four pools, spilling into the canals that irrigate the gardens. A column of shimmering air descends from the ceiling through a large shaft in the floor.

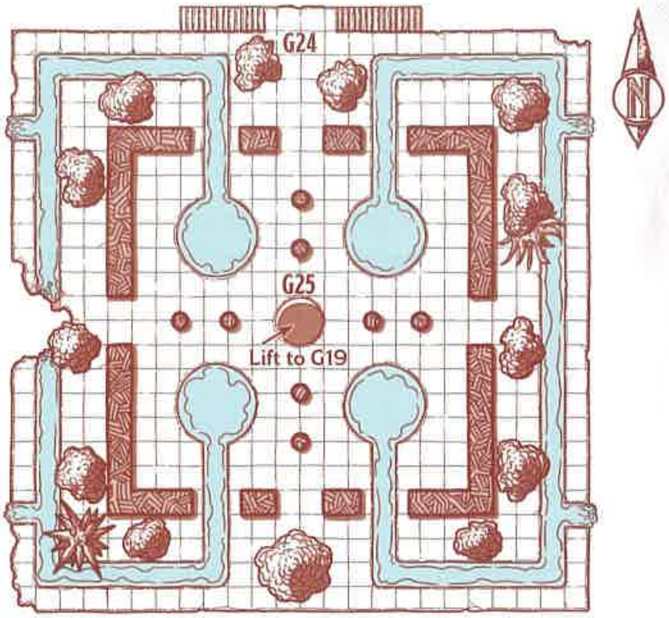
This is the lair of Duban the Magnificent, a haughty **Marid** bound to serve Ozzadraz. When the characters arrive in his lair, Duban is Indifferent and has cast *Invisibility* to observe them unseen and gauge their intent.

Duban oversees the irrigation of the gardens and defends them from invaders. He opposes the characters unless he thinks them capable of defeating Xabazhut and Ozzadraz. If the characters convince Duban of their strength, whether through combat or conversation, Duban enchants one of their weapons with a *Charm of the Slayer* (see "Supernatural Gifts" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) against the dragon.

Astral Lift. The Astral lift, which connects the chamber to several below, is described in "Garden Features." The lift connects 20 feet below to the Antechamber of Unearthly Delights (area G19), and it extends to the ceiling of this room, 15 feet above the floor.

Pools. In the stonework beneath each pool, a tiny portal leads to the Elemental Plane of Water. The portals are big enough for only a Tiny creature to pass through, and Duban is bound to remain here until Ozzadraz dies. The portals allow in clean, fresh water to keep the pools constantly filled, thus refreshing the canals that irrigate the gardens.

The Garden of Everflowing Springs
1 Square = 5 Feet



Map 6.5: Garden of Everflowing Springs

Conclusion

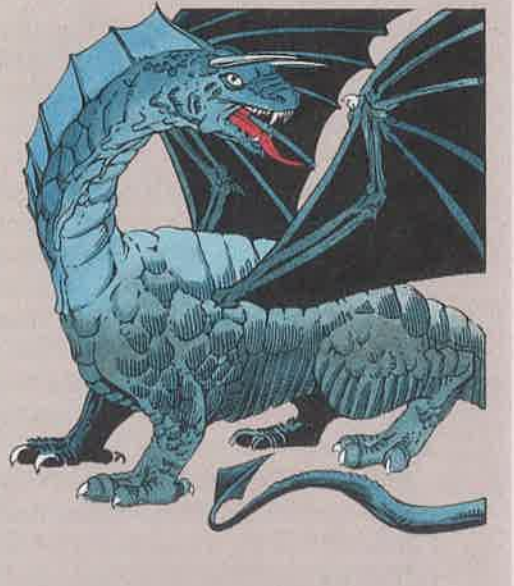
If the characters defeat Xabazhut before the dragon's fire consumes the region, the wildfires dwindle, and the valley begins to heal. But at what cost? Ultimately, the characters' actions determine the fate of the region.

If the dragon is slain, will the gardens be destroyed? Will nature's balance be upset? Will Ginder Nanik and other merchants seek to capitalize on the magic of the Forbidden Vale in the absence of its protector?

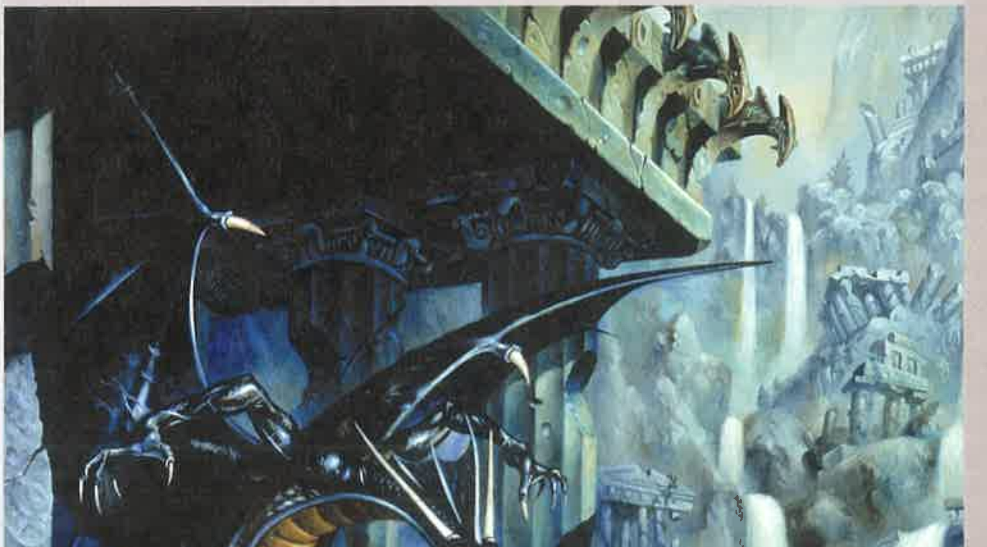
If the dragon is returned to slumber, similar questions arise. How long will the Burning Circle and the traditionalists be able to keep merchants away from the Forbidden Vale? What happens to the relationships among the folk of the region?

HISTORY OF
BLACK DRAGONS

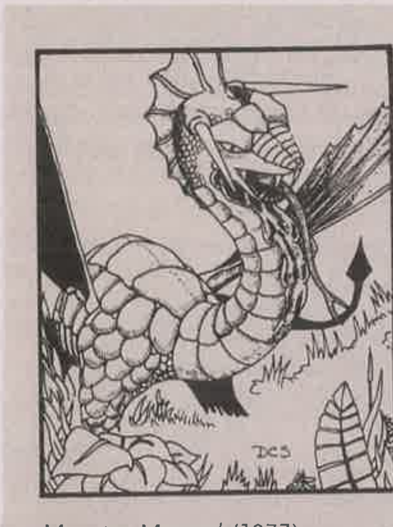
Two prominent horns—almost always pointing forward and, from 2000 onward, elegantly curved—help define the look of black dragons throughout the game's history, along with a prominent neck crest and a snaky tongue.



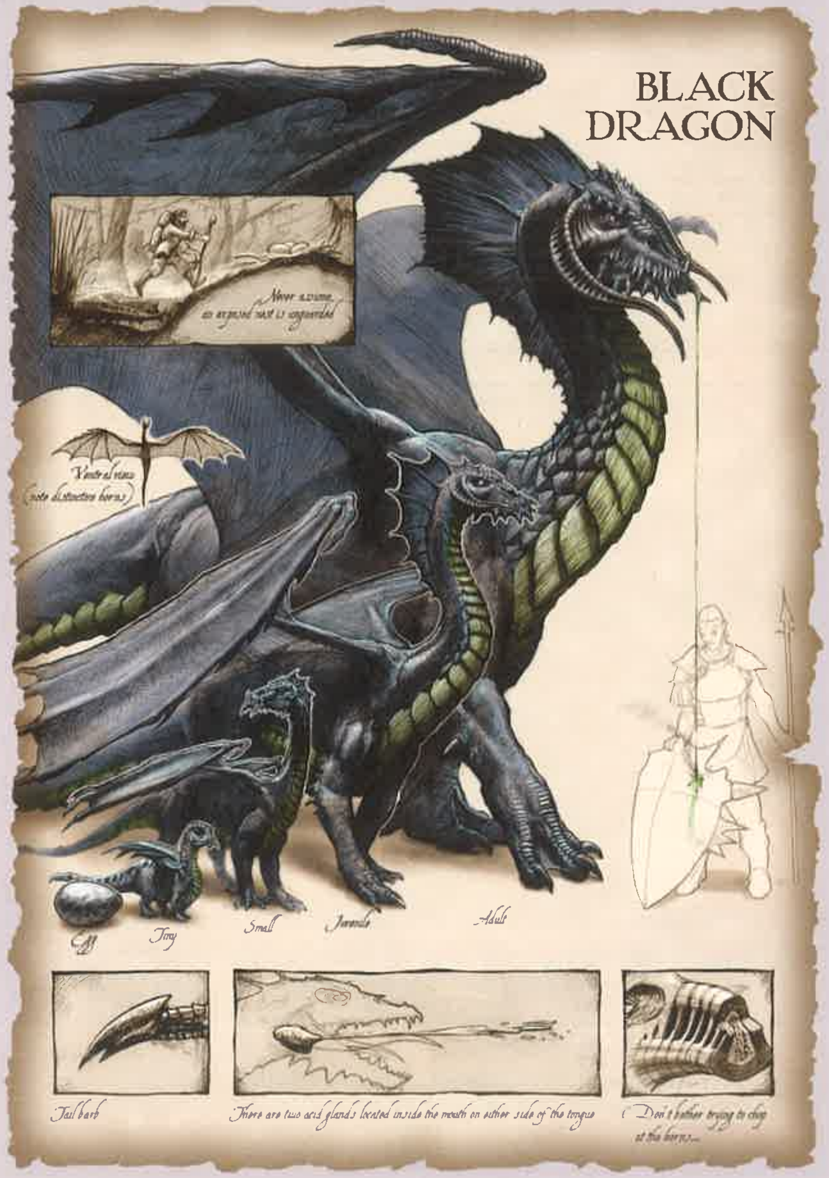
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



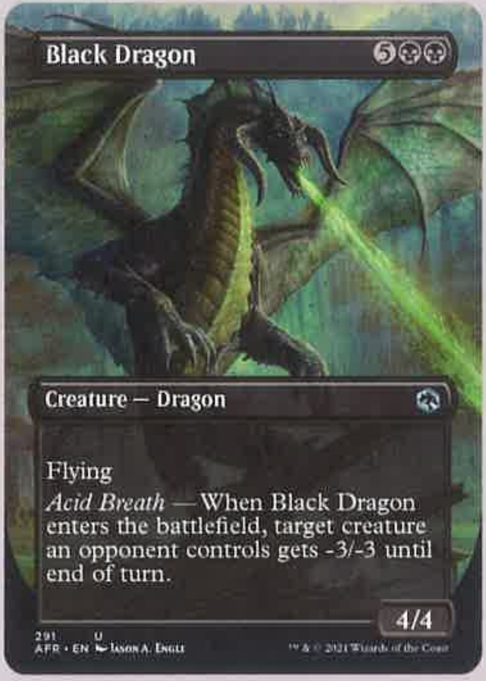
Dragons of Despair (1984)
Artist: Clyde Caldwell



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


BLACK DRAGON
Never assume an exposed nest is unguarded
Ventral view (note distinctive horns)
Egg
Tiny
Small
Juvenile
Adult
Tail barb
There are two acid glands located inside the mouth on either side of the tongue
Don't bother trying to chip at the horns...

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



Black Dragon 5

Creature — Dragon

Flying

Acid Breath — When Black Dragon enters the battlefield, target creature an opponent controls gets -3/-3 until end of turn.

4/4

291 U
AFR • EN Jason A. Engle
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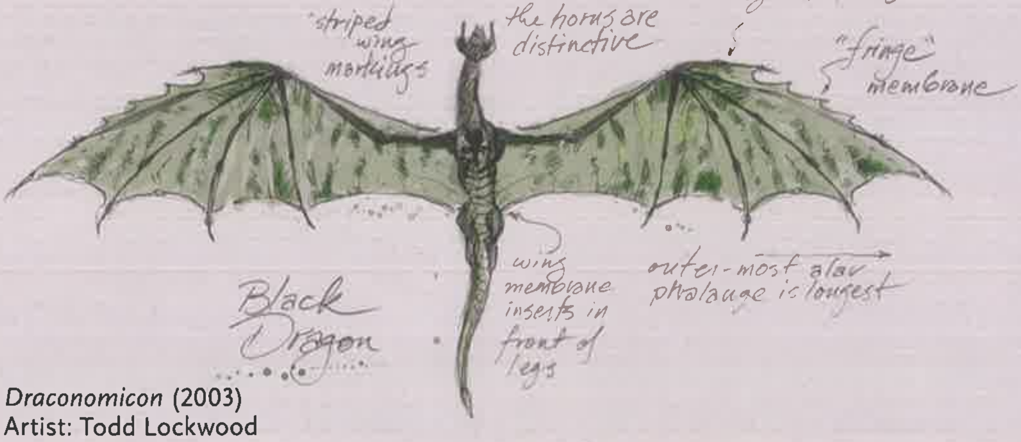
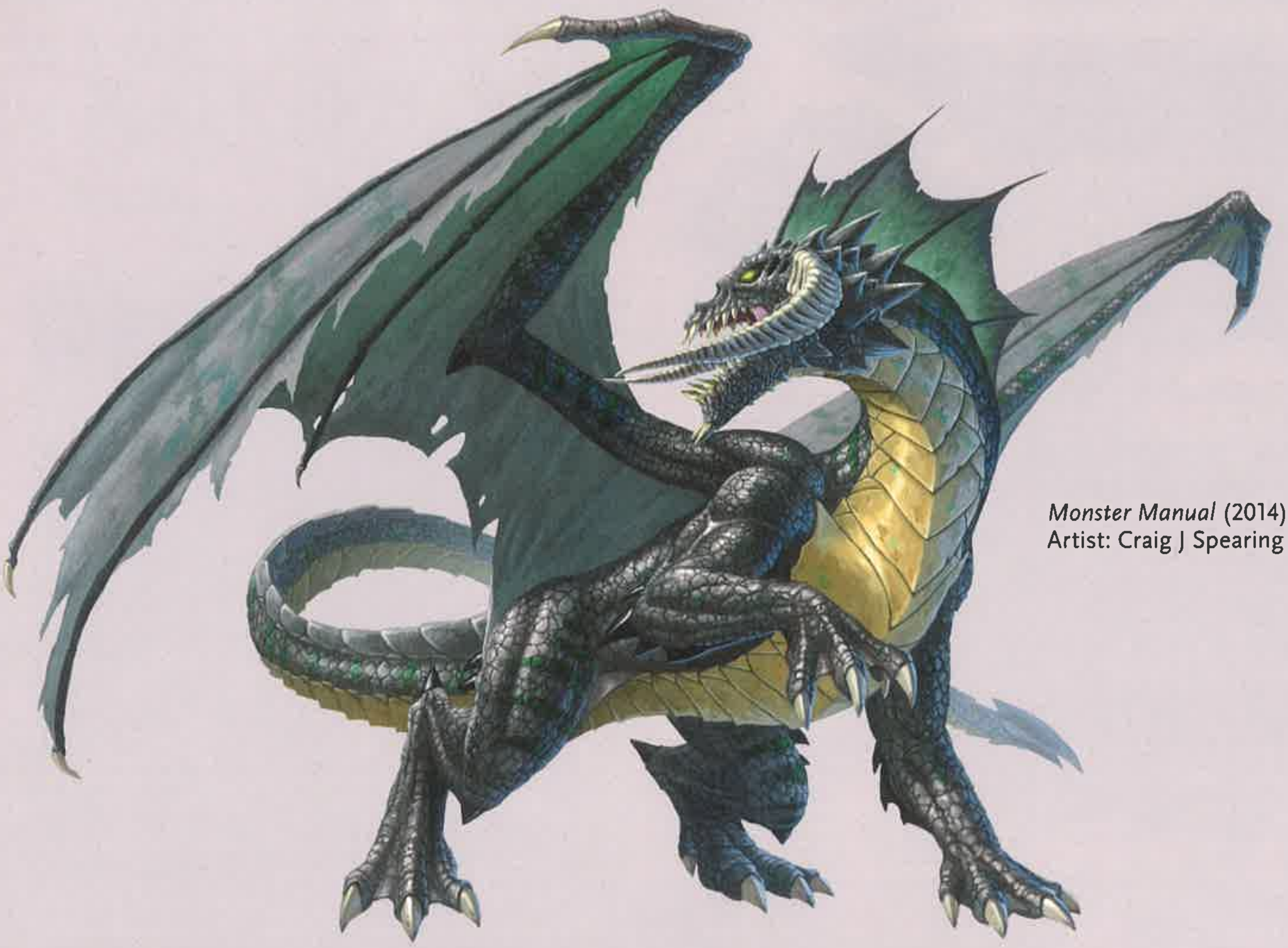
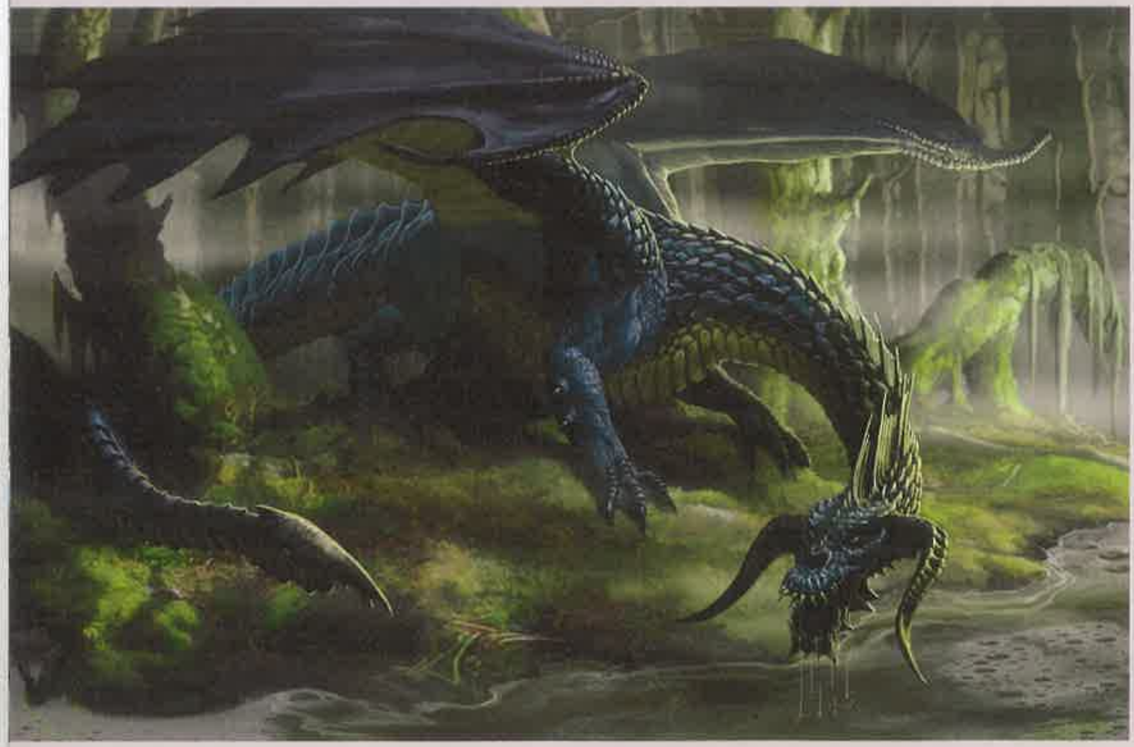
Adventures in the Forgotten Realms (2021)
Artist: Jason A. Engle


striped wing markings
the horns are distinctive
long alar "thumb"
"fringe" membrane
wing membrane inserts in front of legs
outer-most alar phalange is longest
Black Dragon

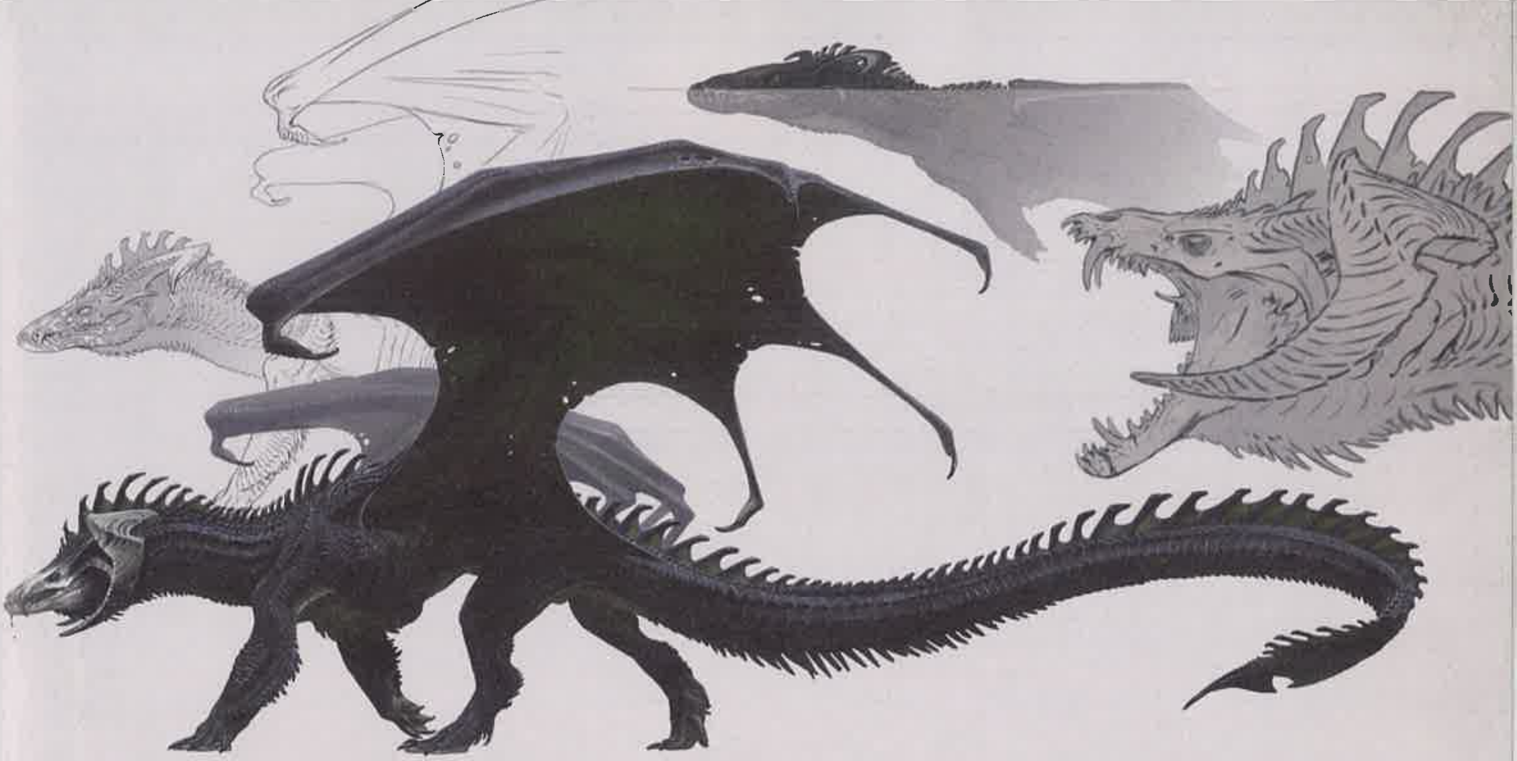
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



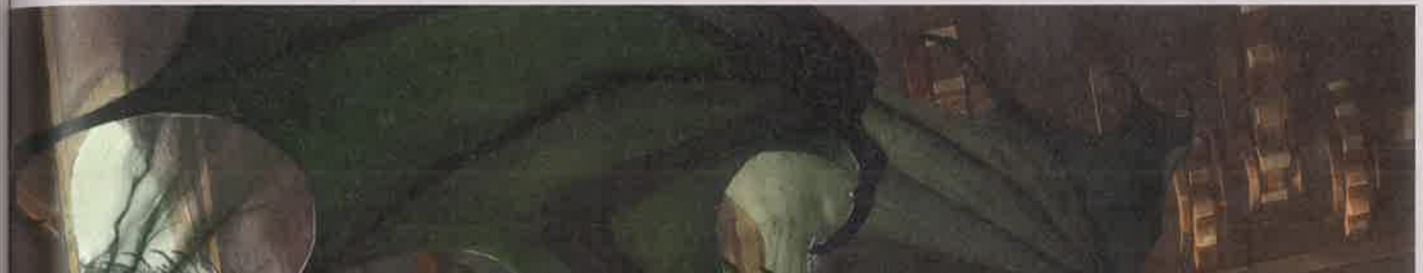
Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Craig J Spearing



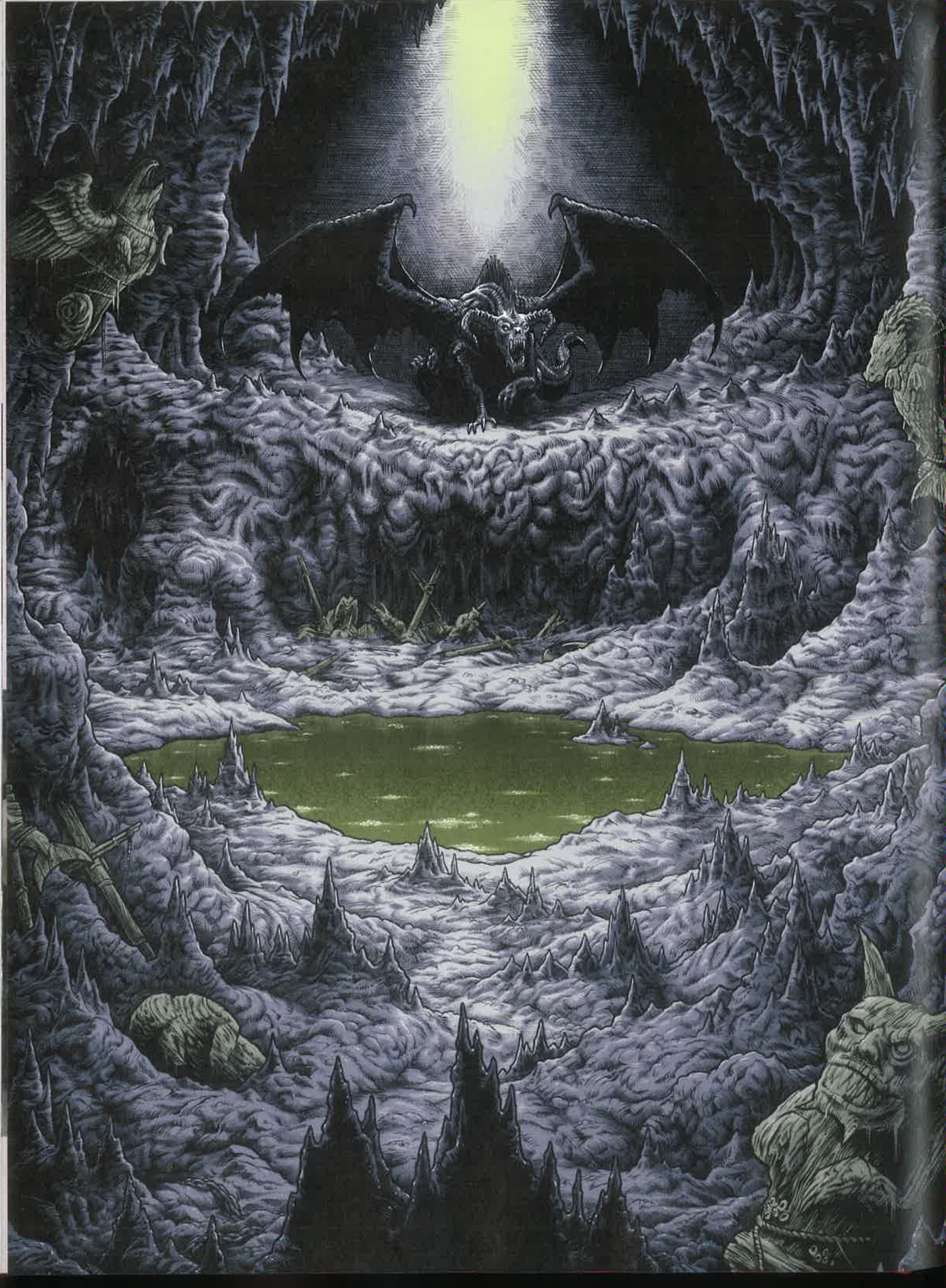
Monster Manual (2008)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Martin Mottet



CHAPTER 7

Before the Storm

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 10
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE THAT HAS SEASIDE SETTLEMENTS.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to this adventure's story:

Respite Ablaze. Pirates who call themselves the Cobblehook Corsairs have raided the village of Respite, and the characters must rescue villagers from a burning tavern. When the villagers are safe, Respite's mayor hires the characters to retrieve two stolen magic gems that protect Respite from terrible storms.

Cobblehook Cove. The characters must foray into Cobblehook Cove, the pirates' lair, to reclaim the gems. There, they discover that an evil dragon named Sablewing has goaded the pirates toward violence. The characters must contend with the dragon and return the gems before an imminent storm destroys Respite.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" and the "Village of Respite" sections. Optionally, read about the Elemental Plane of Air in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or on D&D Beyond.

Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table below. The characters will interact with these NPCs throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

- Assassin
- Black Dragon, Adult
- Cloaker
- Commoner
- Darkmantle
- Fungus, Violet Fungus
  - Necrohulk
- Grick Ancient
- Knight
- Mage
- Noble
- Piercer
- Pirate
- Pirate Captain
- Roper
- Tough
- Animals:
  - Giant Crocodile
  - Raven

KEY NPCS

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Brezo Breezewave	Elf bagpiper	**Commoner** (Medium, Lawful Neutral)	"Rescue the Villagers"
Edgard Brandle	Dead pirate captain	—	B7
Gale Whittenby	Respite's orc mayor	**Noble** (Medium, Lawful Good)	"Meeting the Mayor"
Nelida Adler	Human bartender	**Commoner** (Medium, Neutral Good)	"Rescue the Villagers"
Pierre Kalison	Corsairs' human cook	**Tough** (Medium)	B4
Rubert Forrester	Retired human soldier	**Knight** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	"Rescue the Villagers"
Sablewing	New captain of the Cobblehook Corsairs	**Adult Black Dragon**	B13
Vatri Whistlebaum	Human tavern owner	**Commoner** (Medium, Neutral Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"

Adventure Background

The Cobblehook Corsairs have harassed ships traveling along the Umbradi Coast for years, stealing cargo and demanding tribute. Until recently, however, the pirates assailed only cargo ships and engaged in minimal bloodshed.

Unbeknownst to the locals, a black dragon called Sablewing has seized command of the Corsairs. Sablewing killed the pirates' leader, as well as any other crew who opposed the dragon's violent ambitions. The dragon has instructed the remaining Corsairs to loot nearby coastal settlements, starting with the village of Respite.

When this adventure begins, Respite is in chaos following a Corsair raid. Worse, the pirates stole two magic gems that for centuries kept terrible elemental storms from leveling Respite. The characters must venture into the Corsairs' hideout—now also a black dragon's lair—to retrieve the gems before an impending storm strikes the unprotected village.

The Village of Respite

Respite's layout is shown on map 7.1. Nestled on the shore of the Umbradi Coast, the village is home to about fifty people, primarily humans, elves, and orcs. The veil between the Material Plane and the Elemental Plane of Air is thin near Respite. As a result, many born in the town possess physical characteristics closely associated with the Plane of Air (see the "Respite's Elemental Heritage" sidebar).

Life was peaceful in Respite before the Cobblehook Corsairs' raid. The villagers are primarily fisherfolk and artisans. Community gardens supplement the village's food supply, and the volunteer watch consists of only a handful of retired soldiers from larger cities.

The villagers respect Respite's devoted mayor, an orc woman named Gale Whittenby.

Storm's Eye Weather Vane

Due to the thin veil between planes of existence near Respite, vicious storms originating on the Plane of Air often ravage the nearby coast. Long ago, to protect the village, friendly djinn crafted a device called the Storm's Eye Weather Vane and placed it in the village square. The djinn channeled their magic into two *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire), which they slotted into the weather vane. This device shielded Respite from elemental storms for generations. However, once the Cobblehook Corsairs stole the gems, the weather vane became defunct, leaving the village vulnerable to violent weather—and a fearsome storm is due to hit later this evening.

> **RESPITE'S ELEMENTAL HERITAGE**
>
> The Plane of Air has influenced Respite's population for generations. As a result, many born in the town exhibit physical characteristics typically seen in creatures native to that plane, such as blue skin, hair that blows in a phantom wind, or eyes that flash with arcs of lightning. These traits are described when relevant for the characters in this adventure.

Beginning the Adventure

The characters begin in Respite in the morning, within sight of Morkoth Tavern. Before the adventure begins, ask the players why their characters are here. For instance, the characters might be locals. Or they might be dragon hunters who've heard of a black dragon in the area, a threat they're determined to end.

To begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following text aloud:

> Mayhem rules in the seaside village of Respite. The Cobblehook Corsairs, a crew of troublemakers who aren't normally violent, have raided the village. Black smoke billows from buildings. Sizzling streams of acid flow down the streets. Villagers rush about, shouting for loved ones and struggling to contain the damage.
>
> Near the shore, flames leap from the windows of a low-roofed building. An older, blue-skinned human woman at the front door gestures wildly.
>
> "Fire!" the woman shouts. "There are people trapped inside!"
>
> The other villagers are too frantic to heed her—only you notice!

The older human is Vatri Whistlebaum (Medium, Neutral Good **Commoner**), the owner of the burning Morkoth Tavern. The characters might respond by entering the tavern to free the trapped villagers or by working to extinguish the fire.

Rescue the Villagers

If the characters enter Morkoth Tavern, read or paraphrase the following:

> Inside the tavern, smoke chokes the air. Tables and chairs are smashed, and rafters have snapped like toothpicks. A frantic man whose brown hair whips in an unfelt wind tries in vain to free his leg from a collapsed beam. A dark-haired woman slumps over the bar, unmoving, while panicked cries and pounding come from behind the kitchen door.

The characters can attempt to rescue the imperiled villagers. While they do, passersby outside finally heed Vatri's shouts and begin throwing water on the inferno.

Trapped under the Beam

The elf musician Brezo Breezewave (Medium, Lawful Neutral **Commoner**), known for his bagpiping and colorful pantaloons, is trapped under a fallen rafter. A character can take the Utilize action to make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, lifting the beam and freeing Brezo on a success.

Unconscious on the Bar

The tavern's human bartender, Nelida Adler (Medium, Neutral Good **Commoner**), lies limp across the bar. A Corsair smashed an empty bottle over Nelida's head. She is uninjured but has the Unconscious condition. A character can carry Nelida out of the building; once outside, she awakens. Or a character can take the Help action to shake Nelida awake, and she stumbles out of the burning tavern as quickly as she can.

Stuck in the Kitchen

Rubert Forrester is a burly human retired soldier (Medium, Chaotic Good **Knight**). A Corsair shoved Rubert in the kitchen and slammed the door hard enough to warp its frame. A character can take the Utilize action to break the warped door open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Fight the Fire

If the characters remain outside the tavern, they can put out the fire in the following ways:

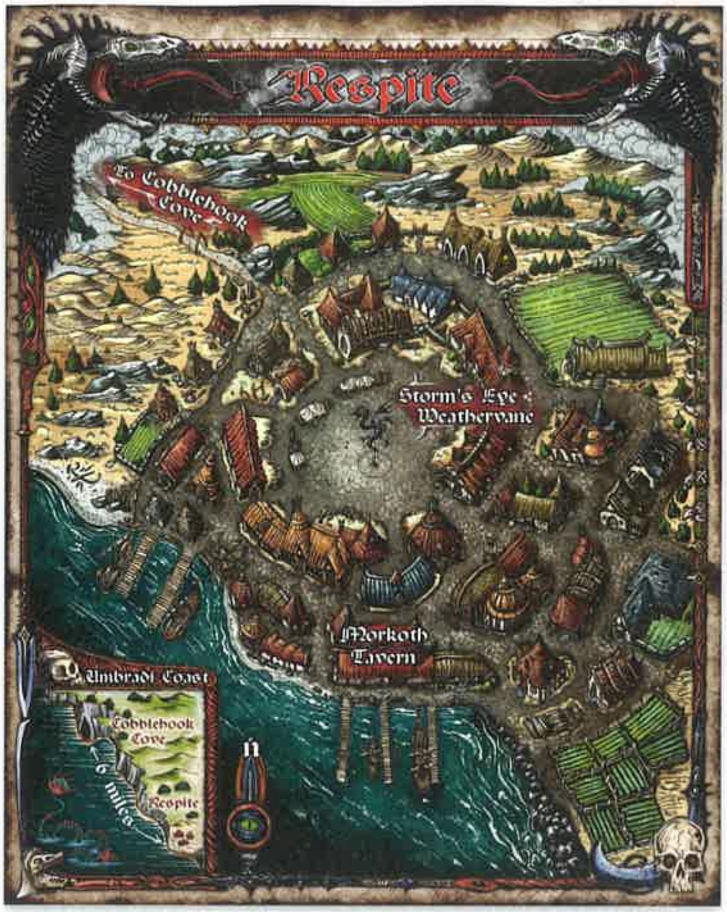
Bucket Brigade. A character can take the Influence action to rally other passersby and dock workers. With a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, the villagers form a bucket brigade to carry water from the sea and throw it on the fire.

Magic. Water created by the *Create or Destroy Water* spell (cast using at least a level 3 spell slot) or a similar effect douses the flames.

While the characters are doing this, other altruistic villagers rush into the burning tavern to rescue the trapped villagers.

Amid the Ashes

Once the fire is extinguished and the villagers rescued, calm descends on the scene once more. The characters can talk with the grateful villagers they saved. Each villager is Friendly, thanks the characters profusely, and gladly provides them with information.



Map 7.1: The Village of Respite

JARED BLANDO

If the characters took no action in this crisis, the fire is extinguished; however, Brezo, Nelida, and Rubert are killed inside. In this case, Vatri is Hostile toward the characters and has nothing to say to them.

Brezo

Brezo was playing his bagpipes to the morning crowd outside the tavern when the Corsairs descended upon Respite. During the raid, Brezo saw a black dragon with a scarred brow fly over the village and exhale streams of acid. Brezo fled into the tavern shortly before Corsairs burst inside and set the place on fire.

Nelida

The bartender has heard tales of the scarred black dragon that accompanied the Corsairs. The dragon's name is Sablewing. Travelers told her a rumor that Sablewing recently murdered a gang of human followers because the dragon found them inept. Sablewing supposedly abandoned his lair outside Adarath, a city farther inland, and is now looking for a new home.

Rubert

A retired soldier from Adarath, Rubert is well aware of Sablewing and the threat he poses. The dragon is cunning and brutal. Sablewing is known to keep a trio of **Darkmantles** close by, allowing the dragon to strike foes through shrouds of Darkness.

Vatri Whistlebaum

Vatri Whistlebaum asks to talk with the characters privately after they've conferred with the rescued villagers. She tells the characters that her grandson Pierre Kalison joined the Cobblehook Corsairs a few months ago in pursuit of excitement and adventure. Vatri is convinced that Pierre, a young man with few skills other than cooking, had nothing to do with the raid. Vatri fears Pierre is in danger somewhere in the Corsair hideout. Vatri asks the characters to rescue Pierre and bring him home. As a reward for Pierre's safe return, Vatri offers a *Stone of Good Luck* that she has owned for decades.

Meeting the Mayor

After the fire is extinguished and the characters have talked to any survivors, read the following:

> Relieved murmurs ripple through the crowd as a sturdy orc woman with white, cloud-like hair approaches. "Mayor Gale," a few bystanders say in greeting, nodding to her respectfully.
>
> The mayor stops in front of you and looks you over. "Follow me, please," she says.

If the characters helped deal with the fire at the Morkoth Tavern, Mayor Gale Whittenby (Medium, Lawful Good **Noble**) is Friendly to the characters and expresses gratitude for what they've done. If not, the mayor is Hostile. She tells them the Cobblehook Corsairs raided the village with the help of a black dragon, wonders aloud what kind of heroes ignore imperiled innocents, and suggests that the characters redeem themselves by ridding the village of the dragon threat.

In either case, she leads the characters to the village square. If the characters follow her, read or paraphrase the following:

> The mayor escorts you to the village square, where villagers cluster around a wrought iron weather vane. The 20-foot-tall structure depicts a serpentine creature with a body made of clouds. Deep scratches mar the creature's iron visage, and its eyes are two empty sockets.

The mayor explains that the black dragon clawed two *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire) out of the weather vane during the Corsairs' raid. If she is Friendly, she shares all the information under "Storm's Eye Weather Vane" above.

As a Study action, any character can examine the weather vane and make a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check. On a success, the character recognizes the creature depicted as an elder tempest, a creature native to the Plane of Air.

A Job Offer

Mayor Gale is desperate to retrieve the *Elemental Gems* before the next storm. She is also concerned because the Corsairs' leader, Captain Brandle, has never before raided a settlement, which makes this morning's raid troubling. She suspects the black dragon is related to the pirates' new brutality.

Mayor Gale offers the characters 500 GP to infiltrate the Corsairs' hideout in Cobblehook Cove, find the gems, and return them to the weather vane. She also asks the characters to slay Sablewing if possible, though she emphasizes the greater importance of recovering the gems.

If the characters seem unmotivated and Mayor Gale is Friendly, she increases the payment to 800 GP—her entire personal savings. The mayor stresses that there is no time to waste, as reports indicate a storm will hit Respite this evening.

Cobblehook Cove

The Cobblehook Corsairs' hideout is relatively easy to access, and Mayor Gale can give the characters directions. The cove is six miles away, and a well-known trail along the coastal bluffs beyond Respite leads to the pirate caves.

Before the characters go to the cove, allow them to purchase any nonmagical supplies they want.

Approaching the Cove

The journey from Respite to Cobblehook Cove is uneventful but grows challenging as the characters approach their destination, as the area is warped by the magic of the black dragon's lair. In addition to the odorous fog and fouled water described in the *Monster Manual*, the surrounding flora grows thick and twisted, and the dirt trail becomes muddy and begins to stink of sulfur.

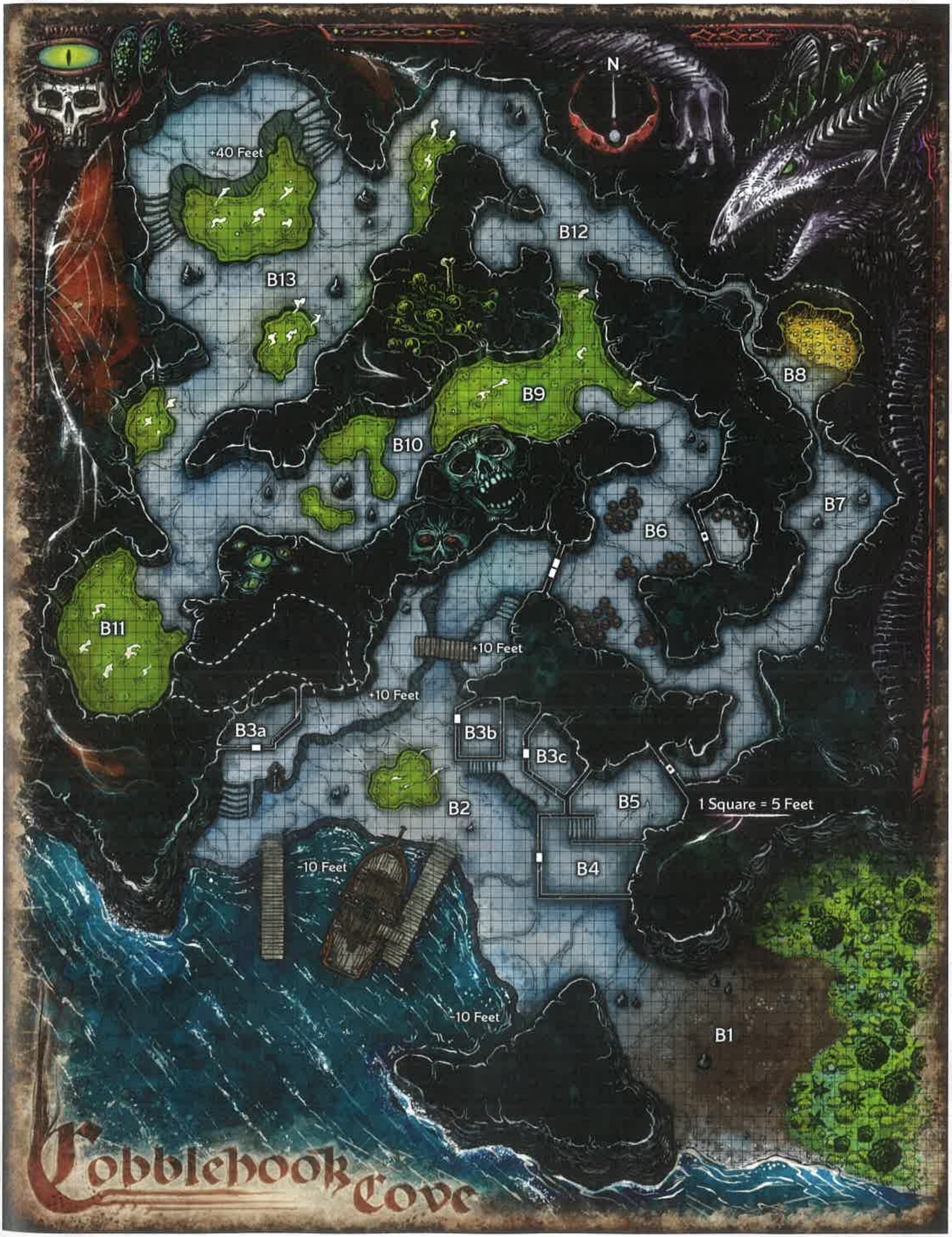
A character who considers these environmental details as a Study action can make a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check. On a success, the character recognizes these as signs that a black dragon's lair is nearby.

Cobblehook Corsairs

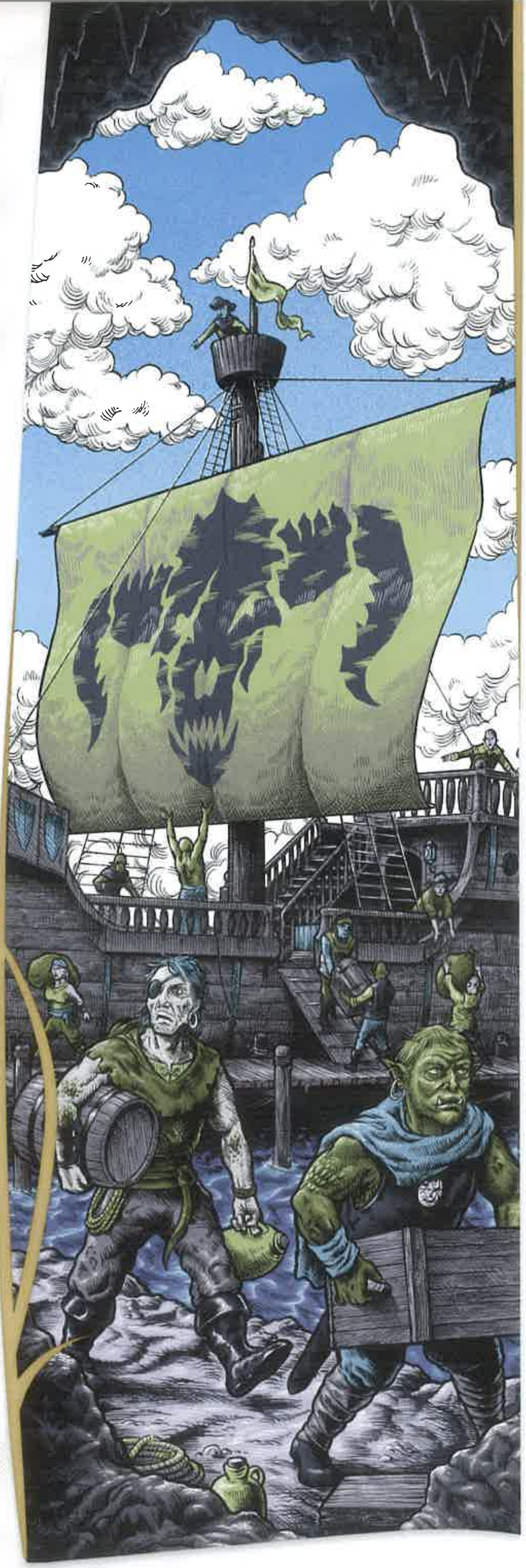
Other than Pierre, the only Corsairs who remain in the cove have sworn undying loyalty to Sablewing. Unless otherwise stated, the Corsairs are Chaotic Evil and refer to Sablewing only as "the captain."

When a Corsair notices a character, the Corsair immediately shouts for help from any ally nearby and starts combat. The overconfident Corsairs fight to the death.

JARED BLANDO


N
+40 Feet
B12
B13
B8
B9
B10
B7
B6
B11
+10 Feet
+10 Feet
B3a
B3b
B3c
B5
1 Square = 5 Feet
B2
-10 Feet
B4
-10 Feet
B1
Cobblehook Cove

Map 7.2: Cobblehook Cove



Cobblehook Cove Features

Unless otherwise specified, Cobblehook Cove has the following features.

Acid Pools

Since Sablewing made the cove his lair, it has filled with pools of bubbling acid. These pools are shown on map 7.2. A creature who enters the acid for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 11 (2d10) Acid damage. Nonmagical objects that aren't being worn or carried also take this damage.

Ceilings

In the cove's rocky caverns, ceilings are 40 feet high except in area B13, where the ceiling is 80 feet high. Ceilings in the cove's constructed buildings (areas B3 and B4) are 20 feet tall.

Doors

Doors in the cove are unlocked except for the door in area B5 and the door to the side room in area B6, which leads to the treasure cache.

Elemental Gems

One of the *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire) the characters seek is in area B6; the other is in area B13.

Lighting

Ambient light or torches in sconces shed Bright Light in areas B1–B6. Areas B7–B12 are shrouded in Darkness, and descriptions assume the characters have a way of seeing in the dark. Flickering torches in sconces shed Dim Light in area B13.

Cobblehook Cove Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 7.2.

B1: Cave Entrance

> The misty trail leads to a cave mouth. Three colorful parrots preen atop tall stalagmites just inside the cave.

The three parrots each use the stat block of a **Raven**. If any parrot notices the characters, it squawks loudly, alerting the Corsairs in area B2.

B2: Seaside Cave

> Torches in wall sconces line this expansive cavern, illuminating its rocky ledges and the wooden shanties built against the walls. To the south, the cave opens to the sea, where a ship

> with a green sail is moored to a pier. A murky pool bubbles in the center of the cave. Grimy, unkempt individuals mill about as a massive crocodile at the edge of the pool crushes a meaty bone in its toothy maw.

Eight Corsairs of various species and sizes are here. Near the acid pool (see below), six Corsairs (**Pirates**) joke about the raid on Respite. Near them is their pet **Giant Crocodile**, which fights when the Corsairs do. Two brawnier-looking Corsairs (**Pirate Captains**) are on the pier next to the docked ship; they have just ferried the loot from Respite into area B6.

Acid Pool. A character who peers into the central acid pool as a Search action can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character discerns that the pool leads into an underground tunnel. The tunnel leads to area B11. Swimming through the acid in the tunnel is deadly for most (see "Cobblehook Cove Features"), but Sablewing makes frequent use of the passage.

Ledges. The rocky ledges to the north on either side of the cave rise 10 feet above the ground and are connected by a 5-foot-wide wooden plank.

Pirate Ship. The ship here is the one the Corsairs sailed to Respite for their morning raid. The ship is empty of loot and crew. Its green sail looks newly sewn and depicts a grinning black dragon.

B3: Crew Quarters

Rickety doors lead into each of these moldy, wooden structures.

> This room is dirty and jammed full of bunks. A table and several chests near the bunks are strewn with clothes and other personal effects.

Crew members live in these shanties when not at sea. Their clothes and personal effects fill the chests and litter the room. Most of the items are worthless, with a few exceptions.

B3a: Western Quarters. One chest contains a *Potion of Healing* (greater). The chest is locked. A character can take a Utilize action to pick the lock, making a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check with Thieves' Tools. On a success, the chest opens.

B3b: Central Quarters. An ornate rug lies on the floor. A character who takes a Study action to examine the rug and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes that if cleaned, the rug would be worth 500 GP.

B3c: Eastern Quarters. A human skull is mounted on the far wall; each of its two eye sockets is set with a gemstone—a jet worth 100 GP that can be easily pried from the skull.

B4: Kitchen

> A tapestry depicting a grinning black dragon hangs on this room's eastern wall between shelves of cooking supplies. A stressed-looking human barely out of his youth, with blue skin and disheveled white hair, stirs a cauldron over a small fire. On either side of the young man looms an enormous wormlike creature with tentacles around its beaked mouth.

The cook is Pierre Kalison (Medium **Tough**), grandson of tavern owner Vatri Whistlebaum. Pierre has been imprisoned here and forced to cook for the Corsairs.

The two **Grick Ancients** are trained to ensure Pierre doesn't flee. They start combat as soon as they notice the characters.

Difficult Terrain. The eastern half of this room is Difficult Terrain, as it is littered with furniture.

Talking with Pierre. If the characters defeat his grick guards, Pierre is Friendly toward them and eager to talk. Pierre admits that joining the Corsairs was a mistake; he yearned for adventure, excitement, and romance, but he quickly realized the Corsairs were merely petty thieves.

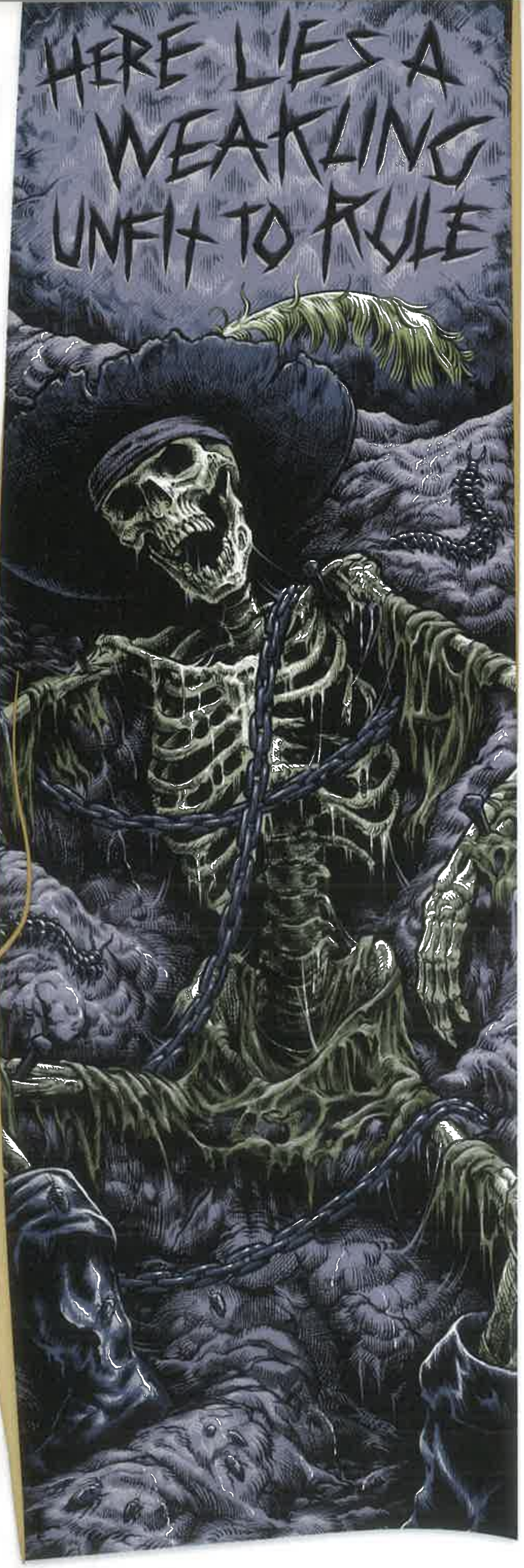
Unlike the other Corsairs, Pierre refers to Sablewing by name. When the black dragon seized control of the crew, Pierre and a few others refused to swear loyalty to him. Sablewing killed the other Corsairs who resisted but spared Pierre and demanded he continue cooking under pain of death. Now Pierre wants only to return home to Respite.

Pierre's Map. If the characters ask Pierre to help retrieve Respite's gems, he draws the characters a map of the cove. The map's areas match those shown on map 7.2, except Pierre leaves off the pools of acid. The cook has been trapped in the kitchen for most of Sablewing's tenure, so he doesn't know about the pools.

Treasure. Two ingredient bottles on the shelves along the eastern wall are actually *Potions of Heroism*. Pierre gladly gives the characters the potions as thanks for freeing him.

B5: Locked Passage

> At the northeast end of this passageway, a heavily padlocked door in a frame is built into the rock.


HERE LIES A WEAKLING UNFIT TO RULE

The lock is simple (1 action to pick) and of superior quality (DC 20). The Corsairs padlocked this door to keep Pierre from going deeper into the complex.

B6: Loot Vault

When the characters come within 30 feet of this area, read or paraphrase the following:

> Singing echoes from the chamber ahead. Cruel lyrics undermine the song's celebratory tone.

Seven members of the Corsairs of varied species and sizes sit on barrels in this area's center. They include four **Pirates,** two **Mages**, and one **Assassin**. Characters who hear the carousing realize the pirates are singing about the death and mayhem the Corsairs caused in Respite this morning.

Elemental Gem. The Corsairs keep valuable loot in the side room to the east. This door is locked with a simple lock (requiring 1 action to pick) of superior quality (DC 20). One of the *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire) stolen from the Storm's Eye Weather Vane is in this room.

Treasure. In addition to the *Elemental Gem*, the locked room contains the following treasure:

Three amethyst gems (worth 100 GP each)
Six orange carnelian gems (worth 50 GP each)
Three obsidian gems (worth 10 GP each)
Large crate with valuables stolen from Respite this morning (worth 1,800 GP)
Bronze crown (worth 250 GP)
Silver chalice (worth 120 GP)
Oil of Sharpness

B7: Brandle's Rest

> A humanoid skeleton clad in rags is nailed to the eastern wall here, its bones hanging off pitons. A wide-brimmed hat with an enormous green feather rests on the skeleton's head. Scratched into the rock nearby are the following words in Common: "Here lies a weakling unfit to rule."

This skeleton is all that remains of Captain Edgard Brandle. When Sablewing took command of the Corsairs, the captain refused to swear loyalty to the dragon. Sablewing murdered the captain, ate his flesh, and created this tableau as a reminder of what happens to those who defy the dragon's rule.

Speaking with Brandle. If a character casts *Speak with Dead*, the gruff-voiced skull of Captain Brandle answers questions as best it can. Brandle knows that Sablewing keeps three loyal **Darkmantles** near his hoard in area B13. He describes how the dragon uses the darkmantles' Darkness Auras to obscure foes' sight.

MATT STIKKER

B8: Moldy Cavern

> Half of this cavern is blanketed in yellow mold.

Twenty patches of yellow mold (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) cover the northeastern half of the floor.

Treasure. As a Search action, a character can examine the area and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character notices a ruby pendant glinting on the floor near the area's eastern wall. This is a *Periapt of Wound Closure*. Two patches of yellow mold grow between the periapt and the nearest safe section of floor.

B9: Bubbling Intersection

> Murky, bubbling liquid covers this cavern's floor.

The liquid is a 2-foot-deep acid pool (see "Cobblehook Cove Features").

B10: Stalagmite Field

> Pools of bubbling liquid surround stalagmites in this cave. The center stalagmite extends toward the stalactite-covered ceiling.

The center stalagmite is actually a **Roper**, six of the stalactites are **Piercers**, and a **Cloaker** lurks out of sight behind a stalactite. The pools are 2-foot-deep acid pools (see "Cobblehook Cove Features"). The roper begins combat as soon as a character enters the area, the piercers fall on prey as the opportunity arises, and the cloaker pursues creatures that evade the roper.

B11: Acid Lake

> A lake of murky, bubbling liquid fills this cavern. The odor of swamp rot permeates the air.

The lake is an enormous, 50-foot-deep acid pool (see "Cobblehook Cove Features") with an underground tunnel that connects to the pool in area B2. Sablewing sometimes uses this tunnel as a shortcut into or out of his lair in area B13.

The pool's bottom is littered with bones.

Treasure. Twenty feet below the pool's surface, a waterproof box that has Immunity to Acid damage is built into the western wall. The box is unlocked and contains a *Ring of Resistance* (acid) and *Armor of Resistance* (acid, Scale Mail). Sablewing finds cruel humor in ordering his victims to retrieve the box, then watching them die trying.

B12: Detritus Dens

> Two chambers carpeted with rotting vegetation branch off from the tunnel. This vegetation is piled high and occasionally twitches.

The twitching vegetation piles are two **Violet Fungus Necrohulks**: one in the eastern chamber and one in the western chamber. The fungi ambush anyone who passes through their chambers or this area's central corridor.

B13: Captain Sablewing's Lair

> Flickering torchlight dances across these walls, where bloodstained figureheads and broken ship masts are mounted like trophies. An enormous black dragon perches on a bluff that rises 40 feet above a burbling acid pool. Raising a scarred eyebrow, the dragon sneers.
>
> "Of course the Corsairs couldn't stop you," the dragon rumbles. "Now, are you going to run screaming from my lair, or should we have some fun before I kill you?"

Captain Sablewing is an **Adult Black Dragon**. Three **Darkmantles** hang like stalactites from the cavern's ceiling; when combat begins, they join the fight, trying to envelop the characters in magical Darkness. All four creatures here fight to the death.

Roleplaying Sablewing. Captain Sablewing has no respect for his Corsair minions, viewing them as tools in his pursuit of destruction and amassing a greater hoard. Sablewing loves to gloat about how easy it was to seize control of the crew.

Sablewing refuses to stand down, hand over any of his loot, or stop terrorizing the coast. He delights in causing pain and suffering. If conversation drags on too long, Sablewing gets bored and starts combat, assuming the characters will be easy victims.

Elemental Gem. One of the *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire) stolen from the Storm's Eye Weather Vane in Respite is in Sablewing's hoard.

Treasure. In addition to the gem, Sablewing's hoard contains the following treasure:

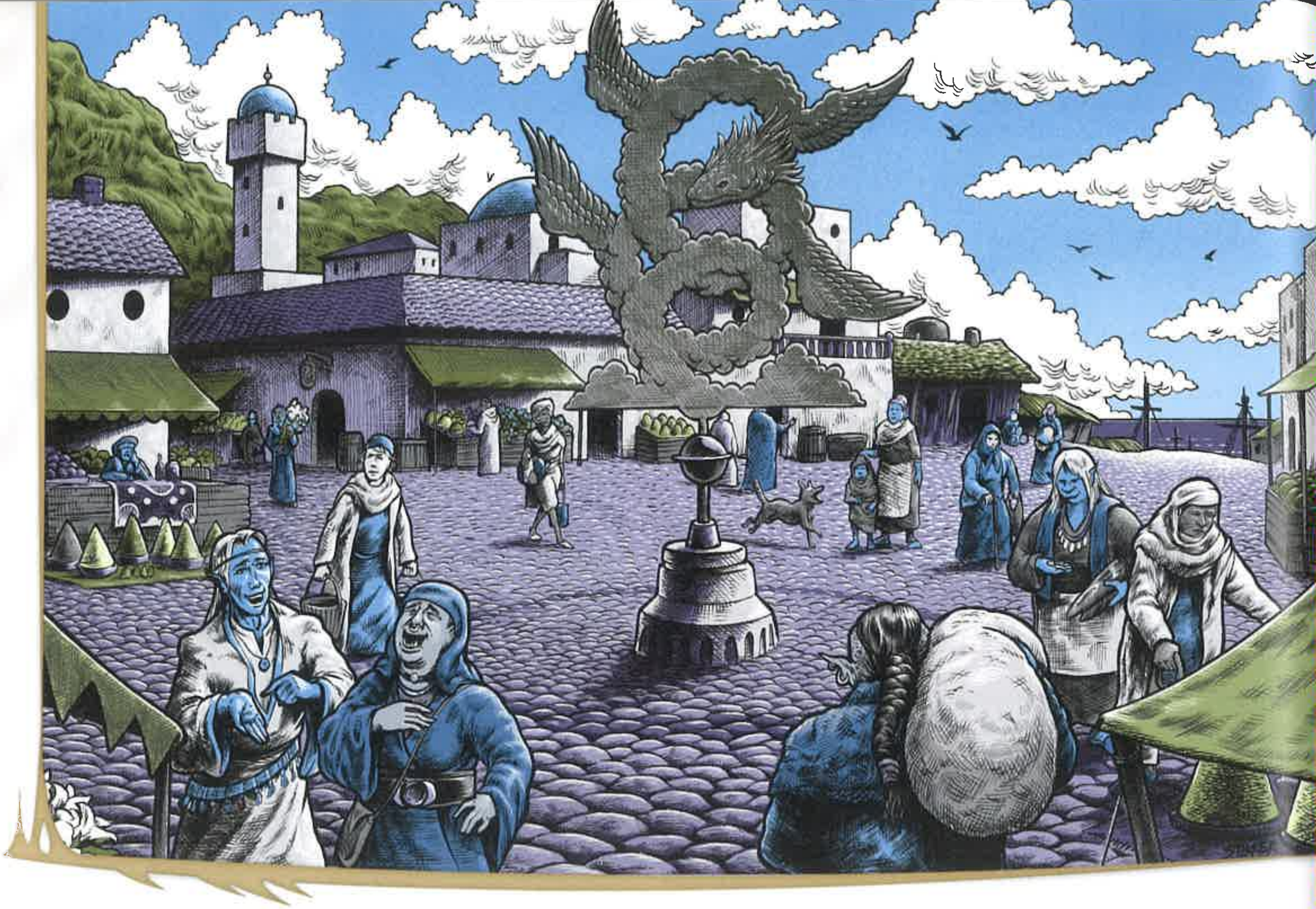
230 PP, 15,610 GP, and 1,100 SP

Framed masterpiece painting of a silver dragon (worth 2,500 GP) by the renowned dragonborn painter Zaemon Vedrak

Mariner's Armor (Plate Armor)

Ring of Evasion

Trident of Fish Command with the name Tideskewer engraved on it



Conclusion

The journey back to Respite is uneventful, though the sky grows ominous as the storm nears. If the characters failed to retrieve both *Elemental Gems* (blue sapphire) from Cobblehook Cove before nightfall, continue to "Broken Weather Vane." If they succeeded, refer to "Restored Weather Vane." If the characters killed Sablewing, the leaderless Cobblehook Corsairs disperse and stop threatening the region. If the characters retrieved the gems but didn't kill Sablewing, the bitter dragon flees the cove, worried the characters will return to slay him.

Broken Weather Vane

A terrible storm from the Plane of Air ravages Respite. Mayor Gale warns the villagers to take shelter, but the full force of the tempest's gales and torrential downpour destroys the buildings previously damaged in the Cobblehook Corsairs' raid. By the time the storm passes, Respite is in ruins. Rubble lines the streets, and the villagers begin looking for a new place to call home.

Restored Weather Vane

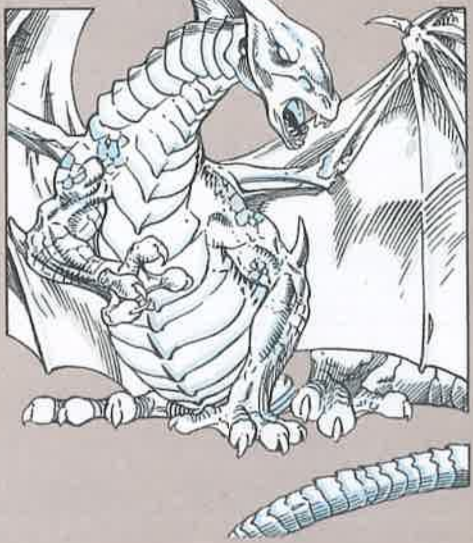
When the characters return to Respite, they find Mayor Gale near the Storm's Eye Weather Vane. The gold she promised as a reward is in her backpack. Vatri Whistlebaum is also near the weather vane, and if the characters return Pierre to the village, Vatri gives them her *Stone of Good Luck* as promised.

With the mayor's help, the missing gems easily slot back into the weather vane. Read or paraphrase the following once the device is restored:

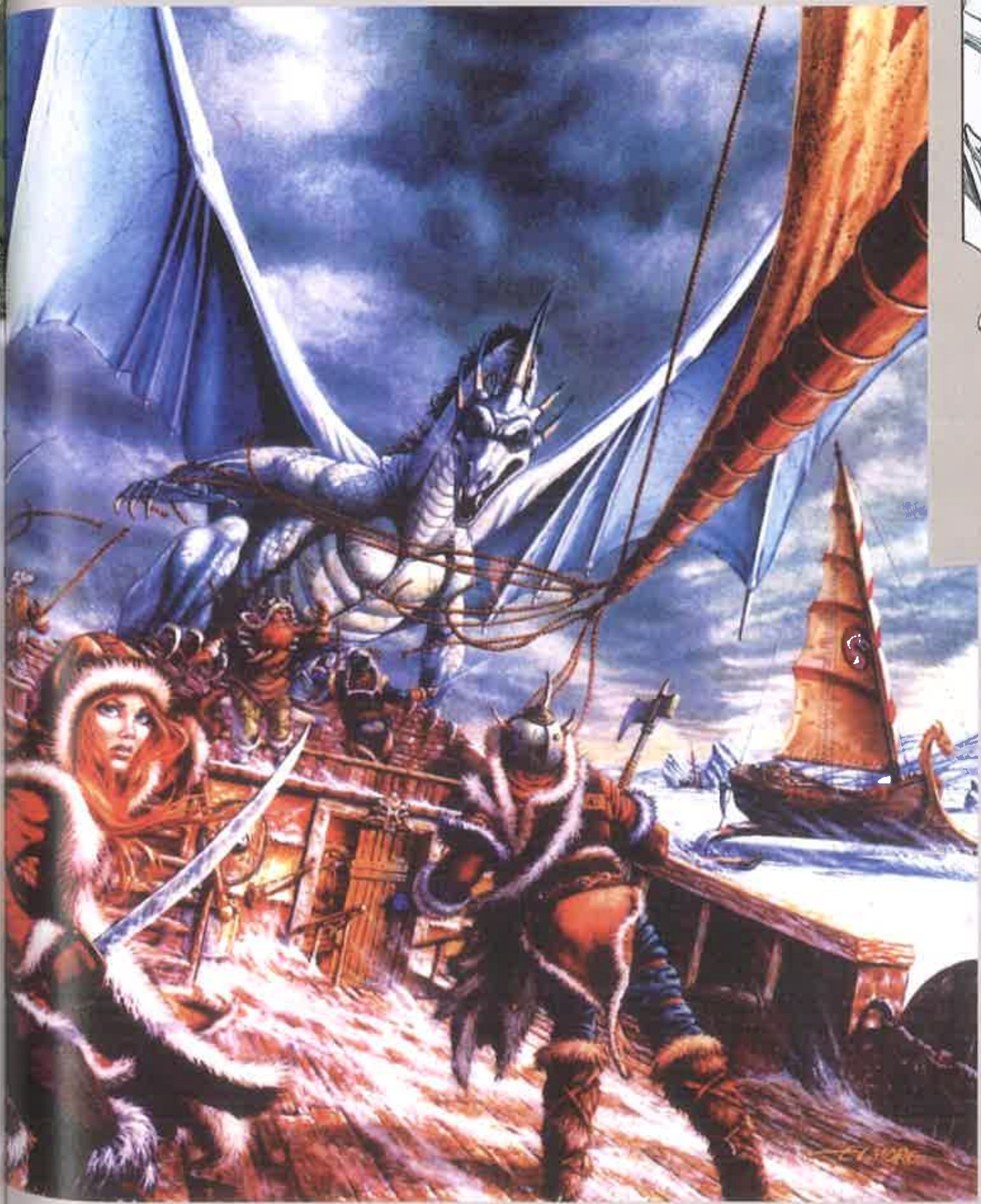
> The villagers gather around the Storm's Eye Weather Vane with their gazes cast toward the shore. Peals of thunder shake the ground, and flashes of lightning illuminate dark clouds rolling in from the sea.
>
> The weather vane's crossbar begins to twirl, and ribbons of blue-green energy pulse from the whole structure. As the storm sweeps toward Respite, the clouds suddenly part around the village. Despite howling winds tearing across the surrounding countryside, nary a breeze nor a drop of rain hits Respite.
>
> The villagers cheer as the storm passes. Some weep with relief. Mayor Gale regards you with a warm smile. "You saved us," she says. "All hail the heroes of Respite!"

HISTORY OF
WHITE DRAGONS

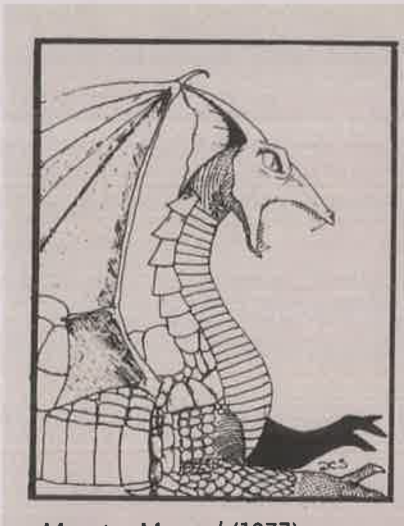
A single horn supporting a crest behind the head is the consistent, defining characteristic of the white dragon through the years—combined with a snarling appearance attesting to its ferocity.



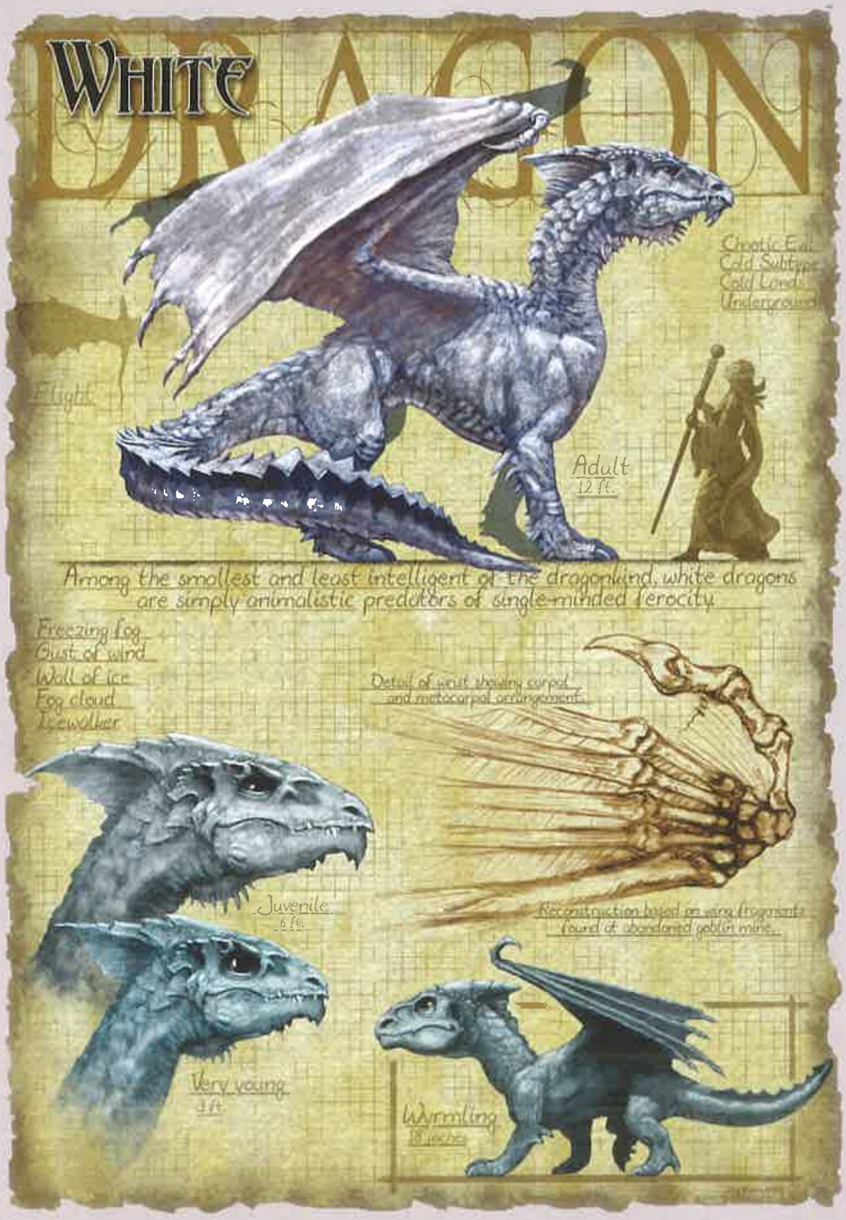
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



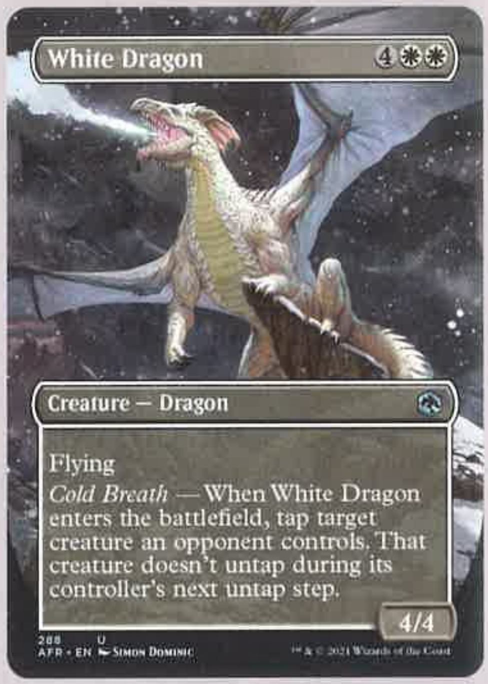
Dragons of Ice (1985)
Artist: Larry Elmore



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


WHITE DRAGON
Chaotic Evil
Cold Subtype
Cold Lands
Underground
Flight
Adult
12 ft.
Among the smallest and least intelligent of the dragonkind, white dragons are simply animalistic predators of single-minded ferocity.
Freezing fog
Gust of wind
Wall of ice
Fog cloud
Icewalker
Detail of wrist showing carpal and metacarpal arrangement.
Juvenile
6 ft.
Reconstruction based on wing fragments found at abandoned goblin mine.
Very young
3 ft.
Wyrmling
18 inches

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



White Dragon 4

Creature — Dragon

Flying

Cold Breath — When White Dragon enters the battlefield, tap target creature an opponent controls. That creature doesn't untap during its controller's next untap step.

4/4

288 U
AFR • EN Simon Dominic
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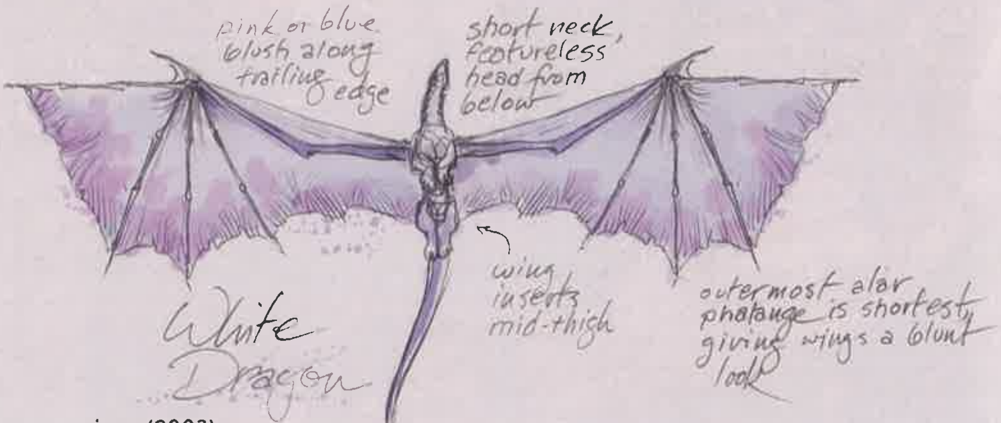
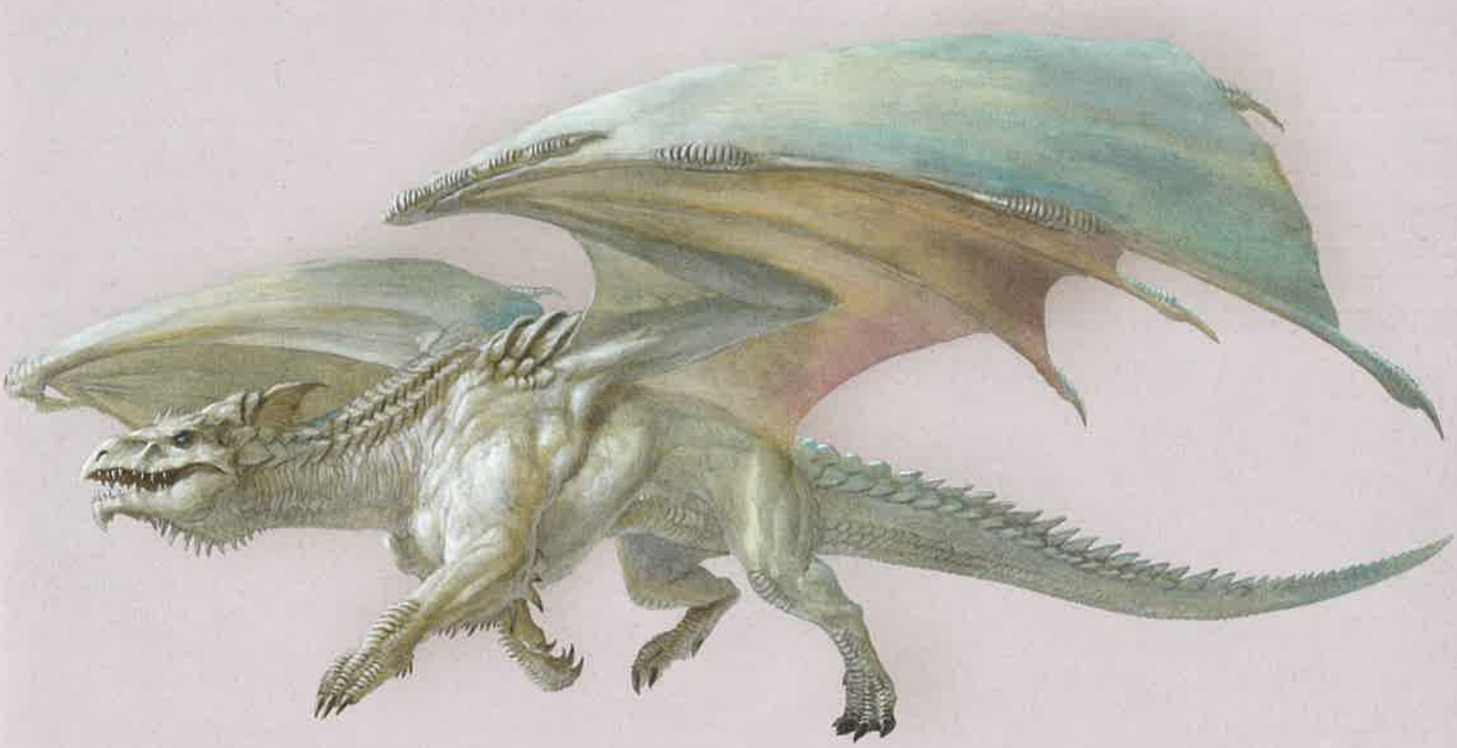
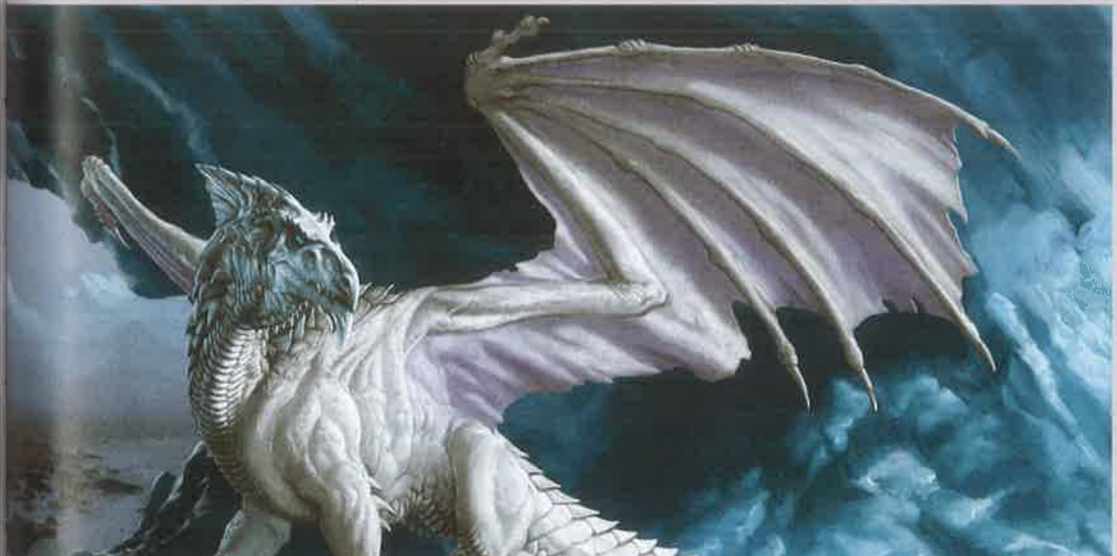
Adventures in the Forgotten Realms (2021)
Artist: Simon Dominic


pink or blue blush along trailing edge
short neck, featureless head from below
wing inserts mid-thigh
outermost alar phalange is shortest, giving wings a blunt look
White Dragon

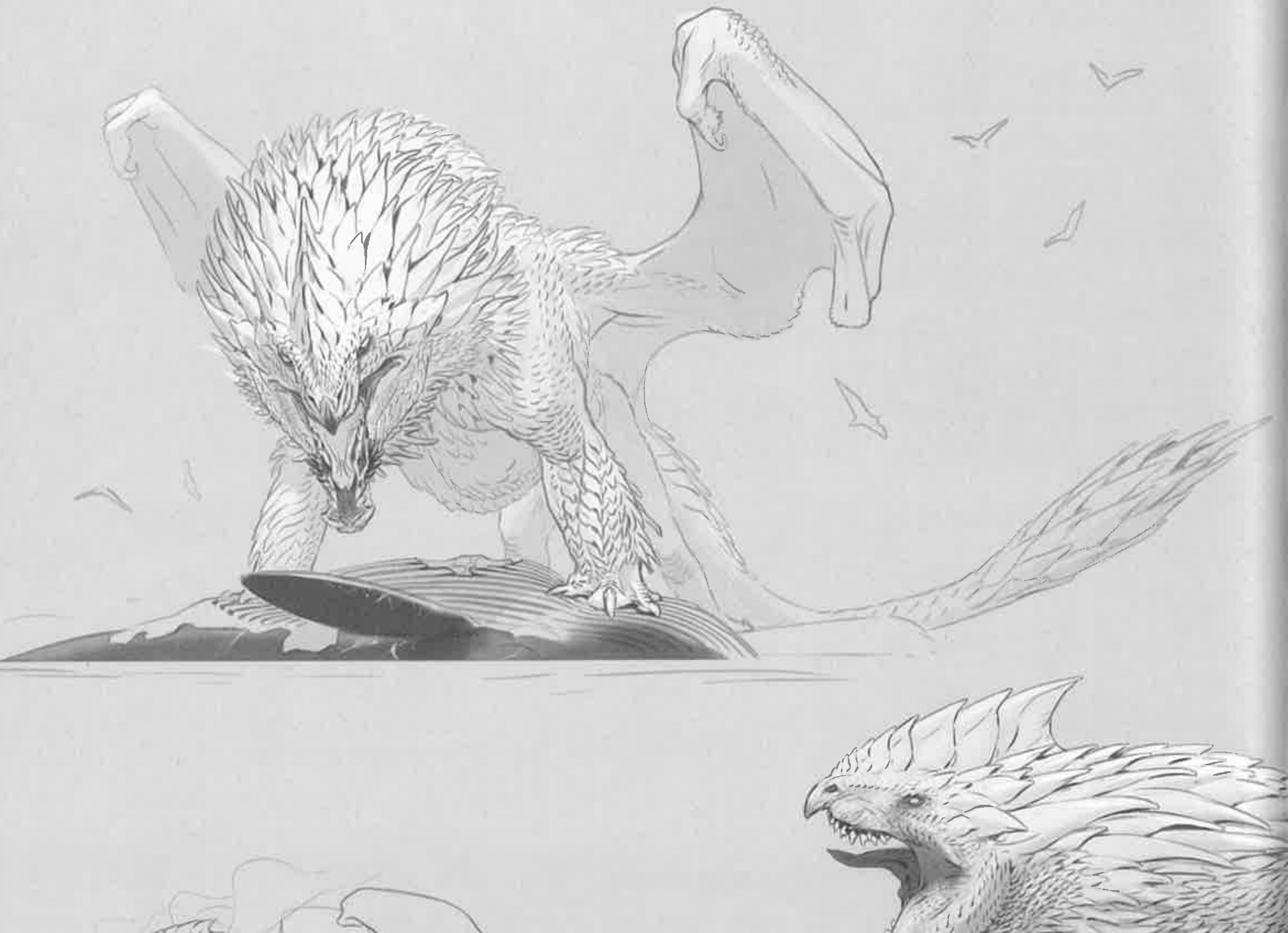
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



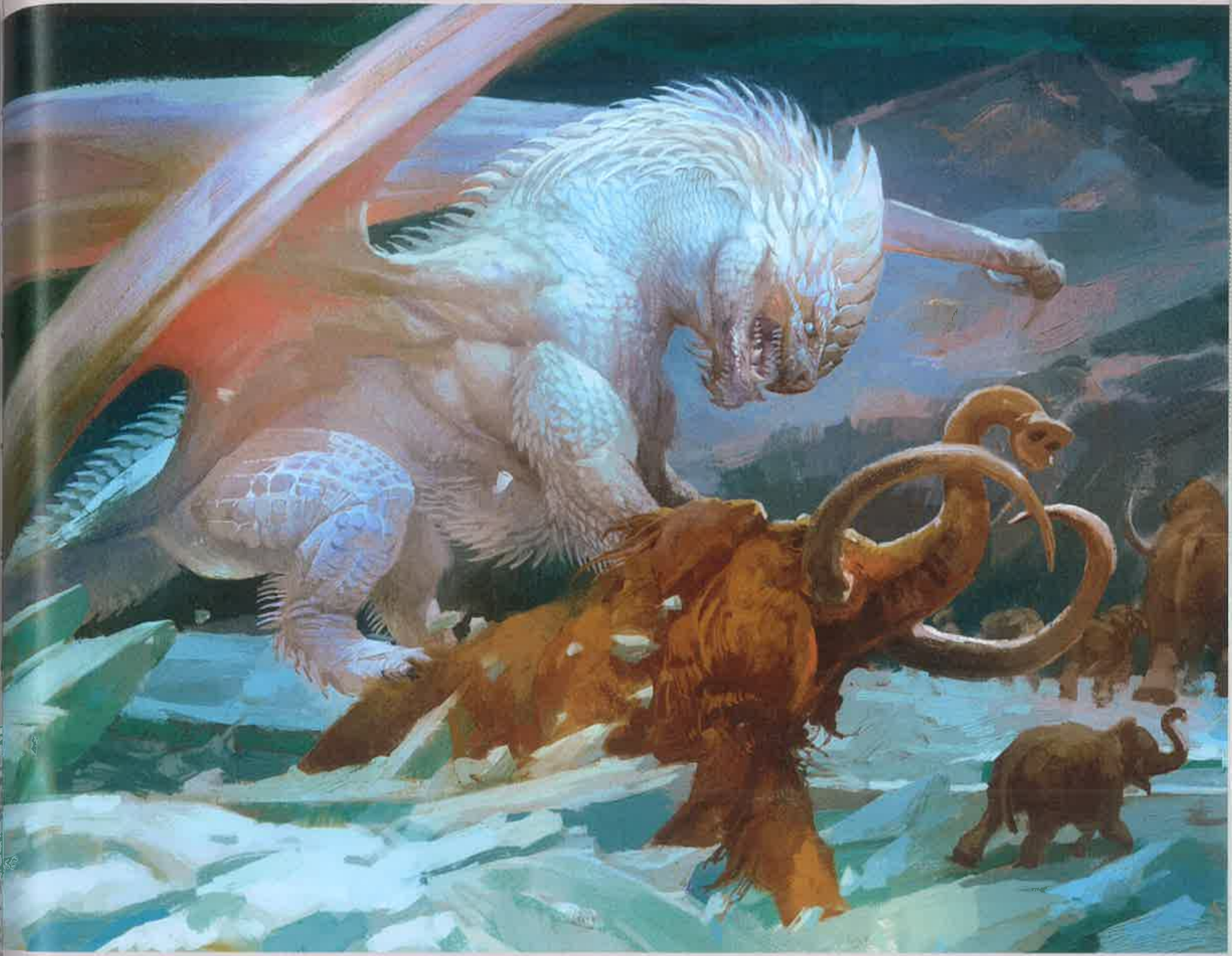
Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



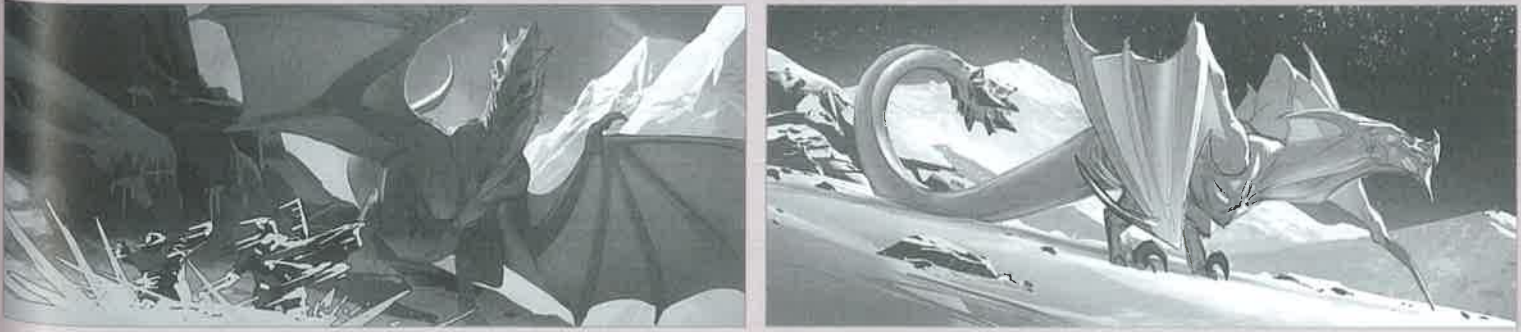
Monster Manual (2008)
Artist: Lars Grant-West



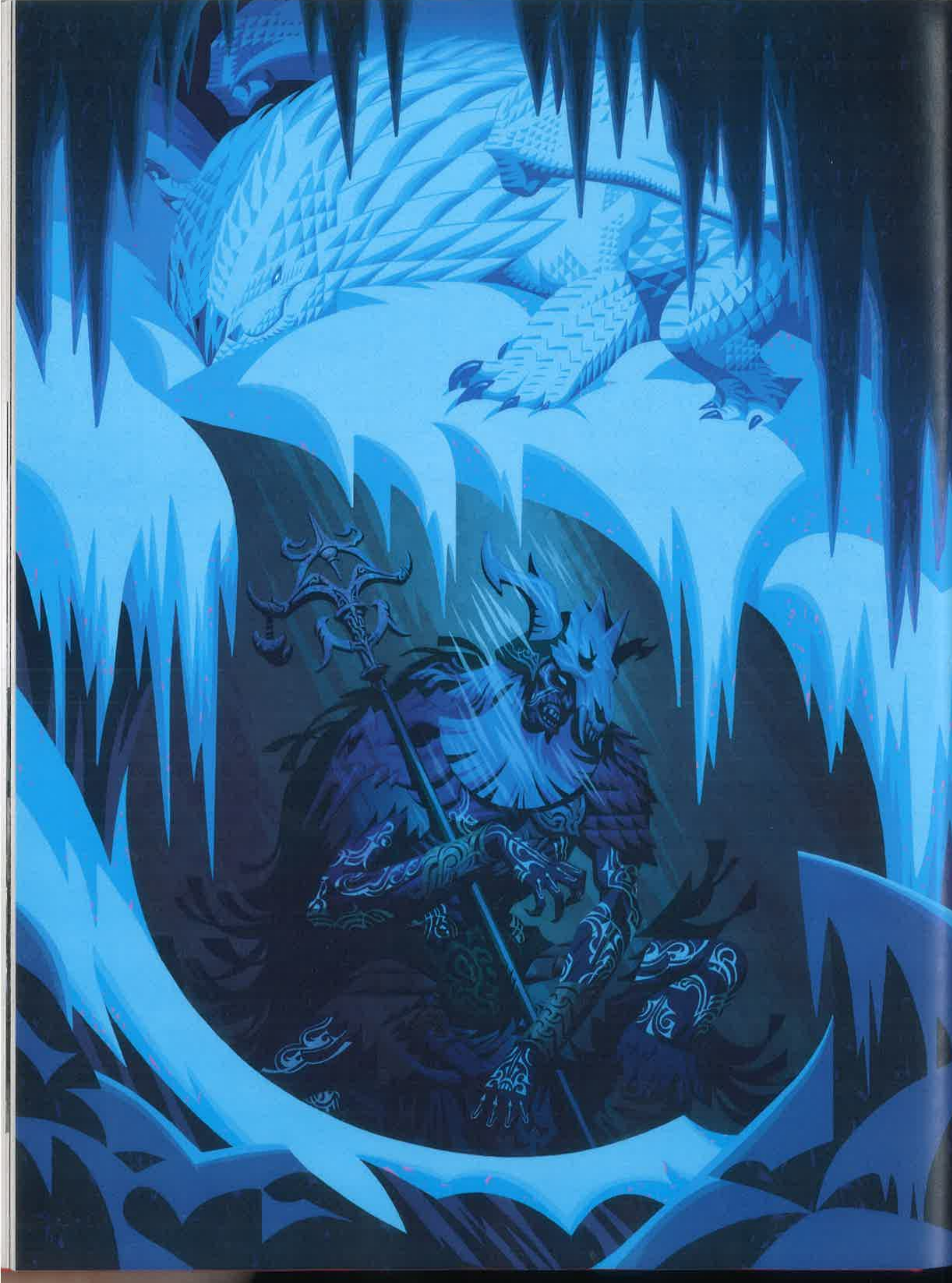
Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Vance Kovacs



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: John Grello



CHAPTER 8

Shivering Death

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 11
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT MIGHT START IN ANY RURAL COMMUNITY NEAR HILLS OR MOUNTAINS.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Heat Breaker. The remains of the giant Elakdras bear the record of a magical ritual necessary to end a deadly heat wave.

Challidax's Trophies. Elakdras's frozen remains are in the lair of Challidax, a powerful white dragon also known as Shivering Death.

Frosty Relations. Frost giant siblings Ralvald and Aerstigga also seek Elakdras's remains, but they've had a falling-out in Challidax's lair, splitting their followers into rival factions.

Into the Ice Caves. The adventurers enter the frosty cave complex where the dragon lairs. There they run afoul of the feuding frost giants and other denizens as they try to retrieve the magical ritual.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section.

Step 2. Review "Frost Giant Factions" and the Key NPCs table to learn about individuals the characters will interact with during the adventure.

Step 3. Bookmark the pages in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or on D&D Beyond detailing the *Wand of Wonder* and the environmental effects of extreme cold.

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Frost Giant
Ghost
Mephit, Ice
Priest
Remorhaz, Young
Shield Guardian
Troll
White Dragon, Adult
Winter Wolf
Wyvern
Animals:
  Mammoth
  Rhinoceros

KEY NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Aerstigga	Giant seeking to ally with Challidax	**Frost Giant**	D16
Ardrandal and Forstrorri	Giants loyal to Ralvald	**Frost Giant** (Neutral)	D4
Challidax (a.k.a. Shivering Death)	Primary antagonist	**Adult White Dragon**	D16
Elakdras	Dead frost giant druid	—	D16
Enstavva	Petrified frost giant	**Frost Giant** (Neutral)	D8
Finkleton	Dead halfling adventurer	—	D16
Gelida	Trapped lair denizen	**Ice Mephit**	D9
Grahlista	Human quest giver	**Priest** (Medium, Neutral Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"
Grimvel and Luskegga	Giants loyal to Aerstigga	**Frost Giant**	D10
Heldalf	Mammoth keeper loyal to Ralvald	**Frost Giant** (Neutral)	D3
Luskar	Giant loyal to Aerstigga	**Frost Giant** (Neutral)	D14
Ralvald	Giant seeking inter Elakdras's remains	**Frost Giant** (Lawful Neutral)	D5
Shabblejaw	Aerstigga's wolf handler	**Troll**	D11

Adventure Background

A deadly heat wave bakes an unprepared pastoral land. Crops have failed, rivers have run dry, and prospects are grim. While the reason for the unprecedented heat is unclear, the sage Grahlista has uncovered a possible solution. The sage invites the characters to meet at her home to receive her proposal.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins at Grahlista's dwelling. Grahlista is a human sage (Medium, Neutral Good **Priest**) and is cordial but Indifferent toward the adventurers she has invited into her home.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud to begin the adventure:

> The heat is impossible to ignore. Across the land, crops have withered, streams have turned to dust, and the locals swelter even in the shade. There's never been a season like this before, and if something's not done, few will remain to experience any season after.
>
> The gray-haired sage Grahlista fans herself as she recounts the heat wave's dire effects. "There's no end in sight," she says. "But I might have a solution."
>
> Grahlista pats a tome bound in frosty blue. "Long ago, the frost giant Elakdras tried to freeze this land into a dominion of everlasting ice. He developed a spell of primal cold and tattooed the ritual on his body. Then he sought to ally with the white dragon Challidax—whom the giants call Shivering Death—and win the wyrm's aid in conquering the region. Elakdras never emerged from Shivering Death's lair.
>
> "But Challidax is known to turn her foes into frozen trophies. Elakdras's body—and his ritual—might be preserved in the dragon's lair. Go to Challidax's lair, search for Elakdras's body, and make a copy of the ritual. In return, I'll pay you each 700 Gold Pieces. And should you find the ritual, I'll throw in a magic item from my own adventuring days. What do you say?"

The magic item Grahlista offers is a pair of *Boots of the Winterlands*. If the characters negotiate for a better reward, Grahlista agrees to give them the boots before they leave but refuses to budge on the amount of gold she offers.

If the characters agree to aid Grahlista, she shares the following information:

Challidax's Lair. The dragon's lair is an extensive network of icy caves two days' journey from Grahlista's home. The terrain around the lair is supernaturally cold, regardless of the season.

A Cruel Dragon. Challidax is a cruel and vain white dragon who has terrorized the region for decades. She often freezes foes into gruesome tableaux to commemorate her victories over them.

Safe House. Tucked in the crevice between hills, an abandoned cabin stands a half-mile from Challidax's lair. This could serve as a place to rest and prepare to enter the lair.

Traveling to the Lair

The journey to Challidax's lair proves uneventful. Light flakes fall in the hills that Challidax claims as her territory, encrusting the rocky ground with ice and snow. The change in temperature from the sweltering lands nearby is profound but not a relief.

On the second day of travel, the characters enter the cold and fog-shrouded area shaped by the magic of Challidax's lair (as described in the *Monster Manual*). The safe house that Grahlista mentioned lies in this area. Characters who seek it find it easily. It contains evidence of past cooking fires and is a safe place to camp.

When the characters seek out Challidax's lair, they find it with 1 hour of searching near the safe house.

Shivering Death's Lair

Challidax has inhabited a network of caverns for more than a century. The dragon doesn't make regular visits to all the caves in her lair, so other creatures sometimes sneak in and inhabit them. Challidax eventually destroys these interlopers, but it could be weeks or months before she notices or responds.

Frost Giant Factions

The characters aren't the only ones interested in the frozen corpse. A group of frost giants, led by Elakdras's descendants, recently arrived in Challidax's lair. They hope the heat wave has weakened the dragon enough that they can slay her and recover their honored ancestor's corpse to lay it to rest respectfully. The temptation of Challidax's hoard is further motivation. However, the giants have recently split into two factions, as described below.

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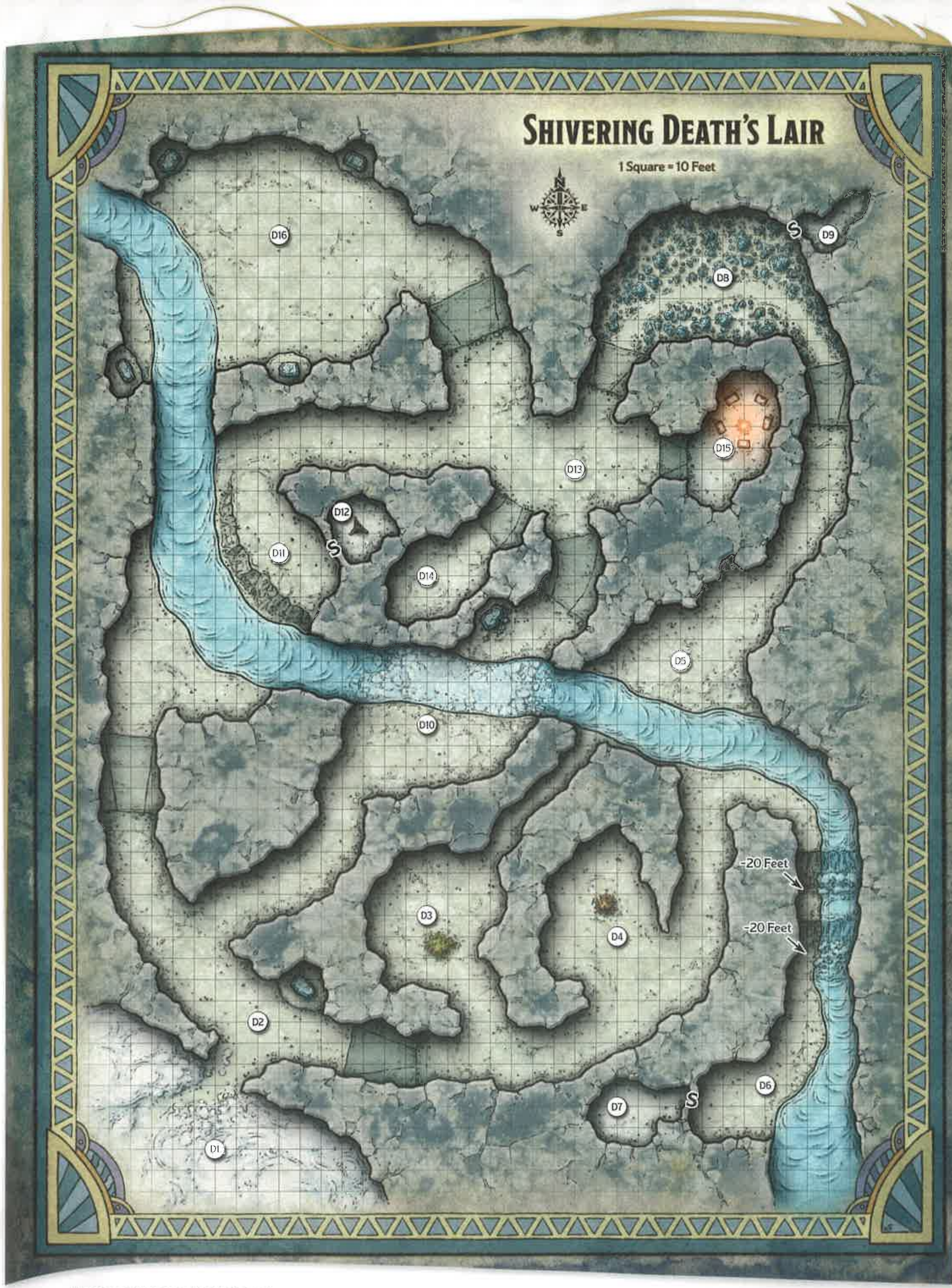
Shivering Death's Lair
1 Square = 10 Feet
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Map 8.1: Shivering Death's Lair

Ralvald's Giants

Ralvald was the giants' leader but was recently betrayed by his sister, Aerstigga, who seeks to ally with the dragon to elevate her power. Aerstigga ambushed Ralvald shortly after the group reached the lair, gravely wounding her brother, then moved deeper into the lair with her followers. Three giants remained with Ralvald, stanching his wounds and saving his life.

Ralvald and his loyal giants occupy the southeastern caverns of the lair (areas D3–D5). As the despondent Ralvald nurses his wounds, he considers how to deal with his sister's treachery. Ralvald is willing to talk to the characters and might cooperate with them to defeat the dragon and recover his ancestor's corpse.

Aerstigga's Giants

Aerstigga has been negotiating with Challidax in the dragon's trophy cave (area D16). Aerstigga has offered wealth in addition to her loyalty. She has a *Wand of Wonder* that occasionally produces gems and has given the dragon the treasure she had already accumulated. Challidax's greed exceeds Aerstigga's gem supply, however. Aerstigga hides the *Wand of Wonder*'s existence from the dragon, and she experiments with the erratic wand away from Challidax's notice to try to make even more gems. The characters might encounter the strange results in several areas.

Aerstigga won't parley with the characters, as she wants to show strength in front of Challidax. Aerstigga's followers occupy the west-central portions of the lair (areas D10, D11, and D14).

Lair Features

Unless otherwise specified, Challidax's lair has the following features.

Ceilings

Ceilings throughout the lair are 25 feet high in passages and 35 feet high in caves.

Extreme Cold

All areas in the lair are subject to extreme cold (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Freezing River

A subterranean river flows through several areas in Challidax's lair (D16, D11, D10, and D5) before cascading over two cliffs and pooling in area D6. The river's origin and outflow are underground. The river is 15 feet deep and filled with fat, white fish that many inhabitants of the lair eat.

Breathing. The river passes underground between areas. A creature that can't breathe the water has to hold its breath while passing between areas via the river. The water is iced over in area D10; see that area for details.

Frigid Water. The river is considered frigid water (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Moving in the River. Swimming in the river requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The current pushes Large or smaller creatures swimming in it 10 feet farther along its flow at the end of the creature's turn.

Light

Ice throughout the lair reflects even the smallest light, providing Dim Light throughout. Areas with campfires are bathed in Bright Light.

Lair Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 8.1.

D1: Lair Entrance

> A wide cleft in an icy cliffside marks the entrance to Shivering Death's lair. Frozen bones protrude from snowdrifts outside the cavern entrance.

The bones are from recently killed animals and human travelers. The bones show gouge marks from teeth the size of daggers. As a Search action, a character can examine the area and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the character notices days-old, partially concealed boot prints in the snow. These prints are several feet in length and were clearly made by giants, though which type is unclear.

Wyvern Roost. Four **Wyverns** dwell on an icy ledge 80 feet above the lair entrance. The ledge blends in from below but is easily noticed from above. These draconic creatures have adapted well to the frigid environment, with white scales and Resistance to Cold damage.

When the characters arrive, 1d3 of the wyverns are out hunting. Those that remain in the roost are Indifferent and fight only if the characters make a lot of noise nearby or ascend to the wyverns' roost. If the characters get in a fight here, the hunting wyverns return to the roost and join the fight on Initiative count 0 of the second round (losing ties).

D2: Remorhaz Trophy

> The cave splits into two passages on either side of a huge centipede-like monster frozen in a block of ice. Although the beast is positioned within the icy block as though rearing up to strike, severe wounds indicate that it died before being frozen.

This dead remorhaz is one of Challidax's trophies. It crept into the lair via the underground river, but the dragon caught and vanquished it in the foggy cave (area D6). Challidax relished posing the corpse in the lair entry to scare intruders. If thawed, the dead creature is harmless.

D3: Animal Pen

> A sour smell of old hay and dung fills this cavern. A shaggy mammoth stands placidly in the room chewing on a mound of reeds.

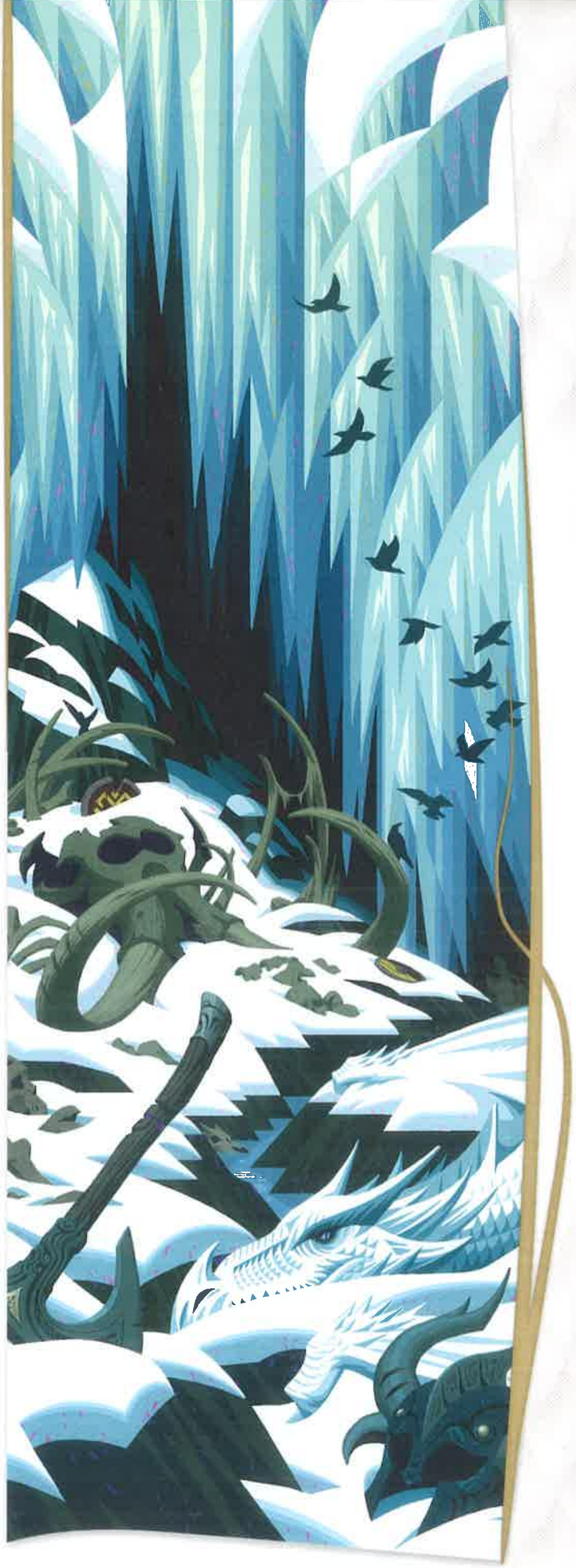
Not visible until the characters approach the beast, a Neutral **Frost Giant** named Heldalf sits on a stool behind the **Mammoth**, combing out the pack animal's tangled fur. Heldalf is Indifferent to the characters and loyal to Ralvald; he feels committed to staying here until Ralvald decides on a course of action. If the characters are aggressive or indicate support of Aerstigga, Heldalf directs his animal companion into battle and fights at its side. Heldalf and his mammoth flee if either of them is reduced to 30 Hit Points or fewer.

Talking with Heldalf. If the characters want to converse and know Giant, Heldalf proves chatty. He shares the following information in conversation:

Giants' Arrival. A group of frost giants followed their leader, Ralvald, to the dragon's lair to recover the body of Ralvald's ancestor, a powerful druid called Elakdras.

Sibling Betrayal. Once in the caves, Ralvald's sister, Aerstigga, betrayed him. She wounded him and vowed to serve Shivering Death. Aerstigga hinted that she had some means to buy her way into the dragon's good graces. The other giants split their loyalties: half of them followed the treacherous Aerstigga, while the other half remained true to Ralvald.

Ralvald's Location. Ralvald is contemplating what to do next in a cave to the north. Heldalf thinks the characters, as newcomers, might be of use to Ralvald and suggests they take the narrow northeast passage to meet with him.



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If the characters don't fight Heldalf but can't converse with him, the giant motions for them to move on, pointing toward the narrow passage to the northeast.

D4: Giant Camp

> Heaps of frost-covered furs surround a large cooking fire in this wide alcove. Two hulking, blue-skinned giants tend to the fire and tidy the campsite.

There is sufficient bedding for four frost giants here.

Two Neutral **Frost Giants**, Ardrandal and Forstrorri, recount stories of long-dead heroes while they maintain the camp here. Both are loyal to Ralvald but grow impatient with his lack of action. They are Indifferent to the characters but leap into battle if threatened.

Talking with the Giants. The giants are willing to talk with peaceable characters who know Giant. They relate the same information as Heldalf, but add that they wish Ralvald would give up his impossible quest to defeat Challidax.

D5: Ralvald's Retreat

> A wide river crosses this cavern, flowing from the west down a passage to the east. The noise of falling water echoes from the eastern passage. A frost giant sits on an icy boulder on the north side of the room, his right hand to his forehead in a pose of evident sorrow.

The dejected giant is Ralvald, a Lawful Neutral **Frost Giant** who knows Common as well as Giant. The giant has become so wrapped up in his own troubles that he doesn't notice the characters until they make themselves known to him. Ralvald is Indifferent to the characters and would rather talk than fight.

Talking with Ralvald. Ralvald treats the characters with respect, assuming only brave adventurers would venture into a dragon's lair. Ralvald provides the same information as Heldalf (area D3), plus the following points:

Aerstigga's Plan. Ralvald considers his sister's plan to win the dragon's favor a bad one. He doesn't think Challidax will honor any pledges of fealty from Aerstigga, even if Aerstigga tries to buy off the dragon with treasure. He thinks it might be possible to drive a wedge between Aerstigga and the dragon, leaving his sister no option but to flee. Ralvald believes that if she flees, she'll ultimately regret betraying him and make amends.

Potential Ally. Ralvald noticed a giant named Enstavva hiding in the icicle-filled cave to the north. Ralvald has always been impressed with Enstavva's wisdom, so he assumes Enstavva has decided to remain neutral in the current conflict. Ralvald doesn't want to pressure her, so he hasn't yet confronted her. (Ralvald doesn't realize Enstavva has been turned to stone, as described in area D8.)

Ralvald's Goals. Ralvald is eager for aid and wants the dragon dead. He would prefer that his sister survive, but he understands that her choices might have serious consequences.

Advice for Ralvald. Ralvald is in dire need of advice. He takes the counsel of any characters who seem genuinely invested in his plight. The characters might discuss these options with him:

Depart the Lair. If the characters tell Ralvald he should simply leave with his loyal giants, he sighs and agrees. Within 10 minutes, Ralvald departs with the giants in the animal pen and campsite (areas D3 and D4).

Fight the Dragon. As an Influence action, a character can ask Ralvald to help the characters fight Challidax. The character makes a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, Ralvald agrees to join the characters in battle against Challidax. On a failure, Ralvald wishes the characters luck but remains in dejected contemplation here. Even if Ralvald agrees to ally with the characters, his frost giant allies in areas D3 and D4 refuse to confront the dragon.

Share the Ritual. If the characters admit they're after the ritual tattooed on Elakdras's body, Ralvald offers a solution. Ralvald doesn't want the ritual; he wants the body, so he can lay it to rest respectfully. He'll permit them to copy the ritual before he takes the remains.

D6: Foggy Cave

> The subterranean river here plunges in two twenty-foot waterfalls. Icy fog fills the cavern.

The cave and the passageway are both Heavily Obscured by frigid fog. A strong wind (like that created by *Gust of Wind*) disperses the fog, but it returns after 1 minute, spreading from the churning water toppling down the cliffs.

A character must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb up or down the slippery cliffs. On a failure, the character slips and falls 20 feet.

When the characters reach the cave at the bottom of the cliffs, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Eerie light suffuses the frigid fog with an orange glow. The sound of clicking and scraping, as of scales on stone, echoes through the fog over the noise of falling water.

Three **Young Remorhazes** lurk here—offspring of the adult remorhaz that Challidax killed and put on display near the lair's entry (area D2). The dragon didn't notice the remorhaz eggs, which have now hatched. The remorhazes are Hostile and hungry.

Illusory Wall. A passage on the western wall, 10 feet above the floor, is hidden behind an illusion of an icy wall. A character who takes a Search action and makes a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the concealed passage on a success. This check is made with Disadvantage while fog is present in this room. Gelida (area D9) can tell the characters exactly where to find the illusion; those who have discussed the hidden passage with her automatically find it.

Treasure. Shredded scraps of armor and a bloodstained Backpack are the only remains of an explorer who made it this far into the lair. The Backpack contains an emerald-encrusted Shortsword worth 80 GP, 100 feet of Rope, and a *Potion of Growth*.

D7: Hidden Camp

> Ice encrusts this cavern and has crept over what remains of a long-abandoned campsite. A bedroll, a backpack, and cooking implements—all sized for a user around four feet tall—lie encased in ice.

Years ago, a halfling spellcaster named Deena Finkleton attempted to plunder Challidax's hoard, but she was caught and became one of the dragon's frozen trophies (see area D16).

Frozen Gear. The Bedroll, Backpack, and cooking implements are Finkleton's remaining equipment and are all encased in ice. The ice encasing them is a Small object with AC 13; HP 10; and Immunity to Cold, Poison, and Psychic damage.

Treasure. If they free the Backpack from the ice, the characters can open it, revealing a frozen bottle of Ink, a Pouch containing 62 GP, a Waterskin full of frozen water, a winter coat, and three *Potions of Healing*.

The cooking implements—an Iron Pot, a ladle, and a small knife—are well made but unremarkable.

Should the characters free the Bedroll from the ice and search it, within they find a control amulet for a **Shield Guardian**. The guardian it controls is in the south alcove of the trophy cave (area D16). A character who takes a Study action and makes a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check knows basic information about this guardian:

- It follows the orders of whoever wears its amulet.
- The amulet's wearer can command the bound guardian to cast the *Fireball* spell stored within the Construct.

D8: Icicle Cave

> Rows of thick icicles—some long enough to connect the icy floor and ceiling—hang in this room like glittering curtains. A path of broken icicles on the ground winds from one exit to the other. A life-size statue of a frost giant woman bearing a look of surprise stands near the southeast exit.

Characters can move around the icicles or break through them, but the entire area is Difficult Terrain. The statue amid the icicles is a Neutral **Frost Giant**, Enstavva, with the Petrified condition.

Releasing Enstavva. If the characters end Enstavva's Petrified condition, she is pensive and Friendly toward anyone who frees her. Enstavva knows Common, Dwarvish, and Giant. She is curious about what brings the characters to the lair and prefers to talk rather than fight.

Enstavva shares the same information as Heldalf in the animal pen (area D3), as well as the following details:

Aerstigga and the Wand. Aerstigga is trying to win Challidax's favor using gems she's secretly creating with an erratic magic item called a *Wand of Wonder*. If the dragon knew Aerstigga possessed such a magic item, Enstavva believes Challidax would slay her and take it.

Neutrality. Enstavva refused to take sides in the rivalry between Aerstigga and Ralvald, believing it would lead them all to doom.

Petrification. Aerstigga followed Enstavva here and turned her to stone using the *Wand of Wonder.*

Given the opportunity, Enstavva rejoins Ralvald, either in his retreat (area D5) or by leaving the lair if the giant leader has already departed.

Secret Cleft. A low, narrow crack to the northeast leads to a cleft (area D9) partially hidden by the ice. Any character who has a Passive Perception of 16+ notices the cleft once the character gets within 5 feet of it.

D9: Concealed Cleft

> The cleft opens into a side cavern that bends to the north. A small, winged creature made of ice lounges in an open metal box that's half filled with crumbled ice.

The **Ice Mephit** relaxing here is named Gelida, who knows Common and Primordial. The lair's most tenacious trespasser, she has avoided the dragon for decades.

Gelida spends a lot of time in her "ice bath" and seems surprised when strangers arrive. Indifferent to the characters, she initially pretends to be embarrassed but cackles if any of them seem apologetic or surprised to catch her "bathing." A mean-spirited prankster, Gelida has no wish to fight; she simply hides behind the metal box if the characters start combat.

Gelida recognizes an opportunity in the characters' arrival. The mephit shares the following information in conversation:

Gelida's Beginnings. Gelida has been here for years. She arrived with her conjurer, a halfling spellcaster named Deena Finkleton who came in hopes of stealing the dragon's treasure. Gelida was left here to count the coins her conjurer pilfered, but the halfling never returned.

Hiding from the Dragon. Gelida wants nothing to do with the dragon. Challidax doesn't know Gelida is here, and the mephit likes it that way.

Lair Layout. Gelida knows the lair's overall layout except for the crystal room (area D12), which she doesn't know exists.

Magic Devices. Finkleton had several magic devices, including this box, to which Gelida is bound, and a **Shield Guardian**. Gelida can't leave the box for more than a few minutes before being magically drawn back into it.

Gelida's Favor. Gelida wants to leave the lair before Challidax finds and destroys her. Moreover, the mephit is done serving other creatures. She wants freedom from the magic that binds her to the box, or barring that, she wants the autonomy to go where she pleases.

Gelida hopes to convince the characters to give her control of the **Shield Guardian** in the trophy cave (area D16). Once Gelida has a good rapport with the characters, she reveals that her conjurer controlled the guardian with a magic amulet. The guardian and Finkleton are now frozen trophies in area D16, but Gelida knows Finkleton didn't have the guardian's magic amulet when he was frozen.

Gelida tells the characters the amulet's location (area D7) and even lets them use the Construct to fight Challidax. But before they leave the lair, Gelida wants the amulet so she can use the guardian to carry her box out of the caves and wherever else the mephit pleases. If the characters agree to her terms, she tells them about the illusory wall in the foggy cave (area D6). Gelida knows the guardian's amulet lies hidden in the bedroll in area D7 but can't retrieve it herself due to her binding (see "The Box").

In the event the characters already have the guardian's amulet, Gelida simply slumps angrily in her box, muttering about disrespectful thieves.

The Box. The metal box weighs 150 pounds and has an additional 50 pounds of ice inside it. If the mephit hasn't touched the box for 1 minute, she is magically compelled to return and touch it as swiftly as she can. The binding can be broken by *Dispel Magic* cast as a level 6+ spell on the box or by a *Wish* or similar magic. The box weighs too much for Gelida to move by herself.

Treasure. There are 310 SP in the bottom of Gelida's box.

D10: Frozen River

> This chamber is covered in icy patches, including one span that stretches from the west to the east wall. Two frost giants sit on stools to the north, smashing a large chunk of ice into smaller pieces.

The two **Frost Giants**, Grimvel and Luskegga, are busily destroying the frozen body of an owlbear, which Challidax placed here as a trophy long ago. No one else knows about their casual destruction of the dragon's statue. Both giants are Neutral Evil, loyal to Aerstigga, and openly Hostile; they fight to the death in combat, as they won't entertain the thought that smaller creatures might beat them.

Thin Ice. The icy patch across the room is a thin crust over the frozen river that flows to Ralvald's retreat (area D5; see "Lair Features"). A creature with a Passive Perception of 15+ realizes the perilous nature of the ice.

Each 10-foot square of ice is a Large object with AC 13; HP 10; and Immunity to Cold, Poison, and Psychic damage. Placing more than 100 pounds on a 10-foot square of ice immediately destroys that section; creatures and objects on that section of ice fall into the river.

Giants' Ruse. The giants know about the river and try to trick intruders that come from the south. They throw pieces of the broken ice statue from across the river and seek to goad intruders into combat. They guffaw if anyone falls into the river.

Interrogating the Giants. Grimvel and Luskegga are unlikely to talk to the characters without first being overcome in a fight. If someone who knows Giant captures or interrogates them, they share the same information as Heldalf (see area D3), as well as the following points:

Aerstigga's Followers. Grimvel and Luskegga follow the frost giant Aerstigga.

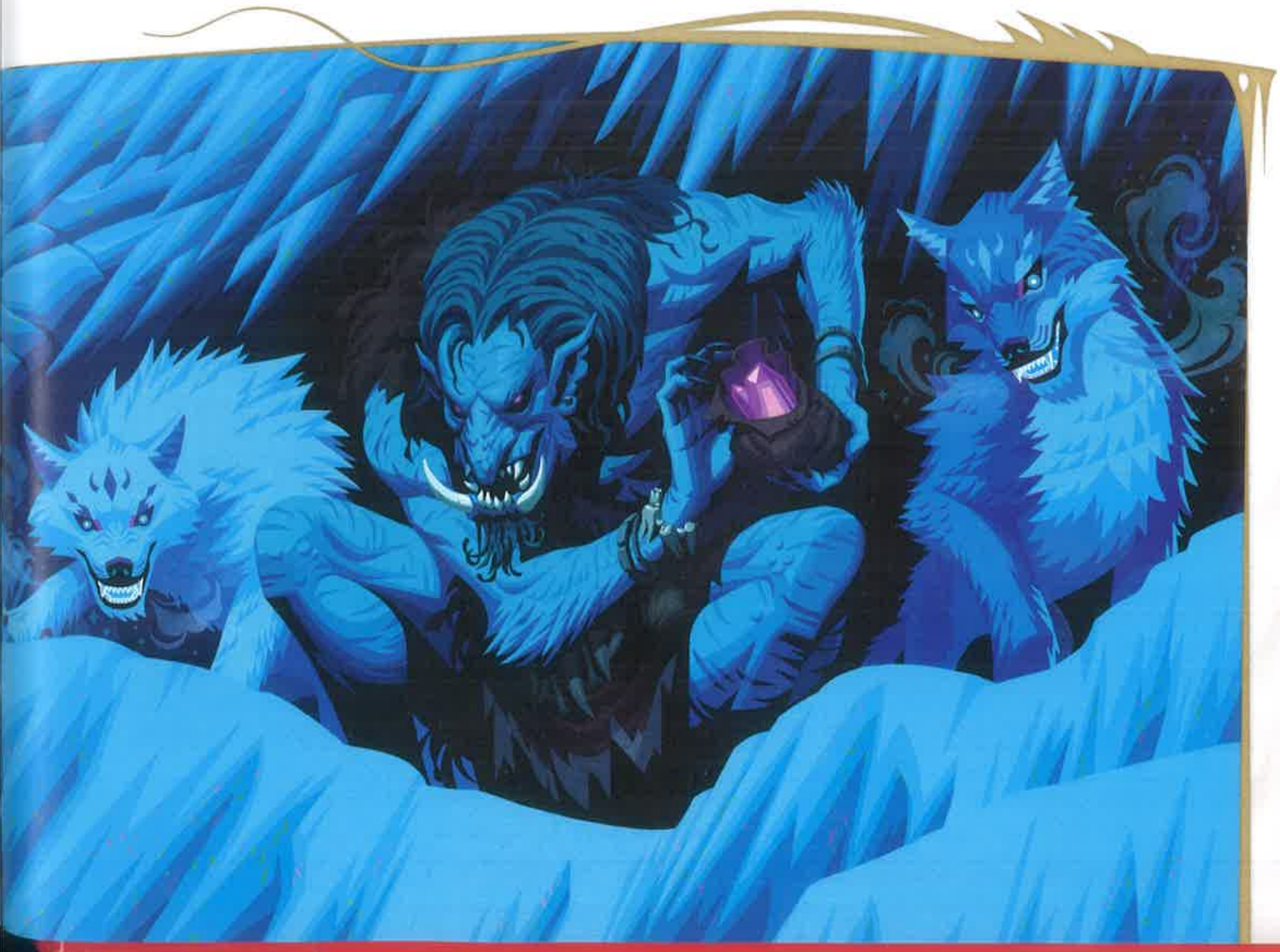
Dragon Ally? Aerstigga has met with Shivering Death. The giant said she'd buy the dragon's favor with lots of gems and the giants' pledge of service.

Secret Wand. Aerstigga has a magic wand that makes gems, but only sometimes—it creates strange effects more often, like turning creatures to stone. Aerstigga has been using her wand to make more gems but never where the dragon can observe her. She doesn't want the dragon to know about the wand.

D11: Wolf Ledge

> Chunks of ice bob down the river that crosses this cavern. To the river's north rises a wide stone ledge where massive, white-furred wolves prowl. With each breath, the unnaturally large canines exhale clouds of frost into the frigid air.

Four **Winter Wolves** skulk here along with their handler, a **Troll** named Shabblejaw wearing heavy furs. The wolves keep watch from the ledge, but



Shabblejaw remains out of sight near an open secret door leading to the crystal room (area D12).

These creatures are loyal to Aerstigga, who commanded them to stay here until she needs them. They are Hostile toward intruders. If the party defeats all the wolves, Shabblejaw retreats to area D12 and closes the secret door behind him.

Ledge. The ledge bears five mats of brown, dead grasses where Shabblejaw and the winter wolves sleep. The ledge's slope is Difficult Terrain.

River. The river flows toward area D10 to the east (see "Lair Features").

Secret Door. A section of the northeast wall on the ledge is depressed a few feet. Inspection reveals the wall has a secret door currently standing ajar. When the door is shut, it is hidden (DC 18 to find). A creature that saw Shabblejaw disappear through the door has Advantage on a check to find it.

Treasure. Shabblejaw has a small satchel holding six crystals, each the size of a human thumbnail. These are pieces of the healing crystal in area D12 that the troll kept for himself. Each bears healing magic, acting as a berry created by the *Goodberry* spell. The crystals lose their magic in 12 hours.

D12: Crystal Room

> A crystal the size of a barrel hangs from the ceiling in this room, emitting a calm, blue glow. This room is as cold as the rest of the lair, but the chill air here feels clean and comforting rather than numbing. A precarious tripod of scrap wood reaches twenty feet high, still fifteen feet below the crystal.

Challidax discovered the magical healing crystal here many years ago and hid it behind a secret door. Shabblejaw (area D11) found it accidentally and seeks a way to cut the crystal down to earn Aerstigga's favor. He's been using scraps of wood to create a makeshift ladder to reach the crystal. The troll has managed to break off a few tiny pieces that he keeps in the satchel he carries with him.

Healing Crystal. The crystal is a natural, magical growth hanging from the ceiling, which is 40 feet above the floor. The crystal sheds Dim Light in a 15-foot radius. A creature that touches the crystal receives a surge of positive energy and regains 70 Hit Points. The crystal grants this healing three times each day, regaining all uses at the next dawn. The light fades from the crystal after it has expended its healing energy for the day.

Rickety Tripod. Shabblejaw's tripod is 20 feet tall. A creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to climb the tripod. On a failure, the creature falls 20 feet.

D13: Experimentation Room

> Several passages with natural stairs lead out of this cavern. The floor is covered in bright green grass and dozens of dead butterflies. The sharp smell of ozone hangs in the air; it's strongest near scorch marks along the walls.

This chamber is currently empty, but it contains several aftereffects of Aerstigga's reckless use of her *Wand of Wonder*, such as the out-of-place grass and the charring from past *Lightning Bolt* spells.

If the characters are particularly noisy here, Luskar the **Frost Giant** and his pet **Rhinoceros** come to investigate from their quarters (area D14), ready for a fight.

D14: Giant Quarters

If Luskar and his rhinoceros are encountered in area D13 instead of here, omit them from the following boxed text when describing this area:

> Tattered furs line the floor of this cavern. Sitting cross-legged on the floor, turned partially away from the entrance, is a frost giant covered in small green leaves that sprout from his skin. Beside him, a shaggy rhinoceros calmly grazes on these leaves. Several enormous cloaks and helms hang on hooks pounded into the frozen stone walls.

Although there's enough room for several frost giants to rest here, only one is present. Luskar (Neutral **Frost Giant**) sprouted greenery when Aerstigga used her *Wand of Wonder* nearby. The wand also conjured the **Rhinoceros**; Luskar has named the beast Grom and is training it to fight alongside him.

Luskar isn't expecting intruders. If the characters make themselves known, he proves Hostile, grabbing his weapons and commanding his pet into battle with him. Luskar isn't as fanatical as the others who follow Aerstigga; he surrenders and calls off his pet if he or the rhino is Bloodied.

Talking with Luskar. If defeated or otherwise coerced into talking, Luskar shares the same information as Grimvel and Luskegga (see area D10). Luskar then wants to leave the lair, preferably with his pet.

D15: Frozen Corpses

> Most of this cave is filled with ice. Five human corpses are dimly visible, each frozen deep within an icy pillar. Each corpse has a weapon raised and wears a look of rage. A campfire flickers on the ground between the frozen figures, somehow burning on the bare cave floor.

Challidax ambushed five would-be dragon slayers here, freezing them to death before they could do more than raise their weapons. Their restless spirits linger here as five **Ghosts.** The spirits are Chaotic Neutral. They emerge from their frozen corpses if the pillars entombing them are touched or damaged.

The spirits are Hostile toward other creatures and can't rest until Challidax is slain. If a ghost possesses a creature, that creature heads directly to the trophy cave (area D16) and tries to slay the dragon.

As an Influence action, a character can try to calm the spirits and make a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, the ghosts stand down and explain their hatred for Challidax.

The ghosts can leave this chamber only while possessing another creature. If the possession ends, the ghost reappears in area D15.

Flame. The flame at the room's center is a heatless, illusory manifestation of the spirits' hatred. If the spirits are put to rest, the flame vanishes.

Treasure. Each of the five icy pillars is a Large object with AC 13; HP 30; and Immunity to Cold, Poison, and Psychic damage. Breaking them releases the corpses within. Two of the bodies possess silver armbands worth 300 GP each, and another holds a *Berserker Axe*. The bodies' other gear is worthless.

D16: Trophy Cave

> A river churning with ice chunks flows at the west end of this enormous cavern, running amid heaps of coins covering the frozen stone floor. Around the cavern's perimeter yawn four broad alcoves, each plugged with a block of ice entombing a frozen creature.
>
> "Worthless glass!" comes a voice like a splitting glacier. At the room's center, a towering white dragon lets a rain of colored gems drop from between its claws. "Your offerings are as vain as your promises to serve!"
>
> A frost giant with a mighty axe scowls as she watches the gems scatter.

Challidax, an **Adult White Dragon,** is bargaining with the **Frost Giant** Aerstigga. The pair are having a contentious discussion about how Aerstigga and the giants who serve her could prove useful to the white dragon. Should they notice intruders, though, both are Hostile, and Challidax commands Aerstigga to prove her worth. The giant rushes to engage interlopers and won't surrender or flee while Challidax is present.

Aerstigga. Aerstigga knows Common and Giant, and she carries a *Wand of Wonder*, although she won't display or use it in Challidax's presence.

Challidax. Challidax hangs back to evaluate both Aerstigga and the invaders. The dragon doesn't join the fray until she herself takes damage or Aerstigga is defeated, though it's possible for the characters to turn Challidax against her giant ally (see "Challidax's Rage" below). Once engaged in combat, Challidax is ruthless; she doesn't care if she harms Aerstigga in her attempts to defeat the characters.

If Challidax is reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, she dives into the frozen river. She makes her way to the healing crystal in the crystal room (area D12), then tries to ambush the characters elsewhere in her lair.

Challidax's Rage. Aerstigga and her giants have not been good guests in Challidax's lair. A character can take an Influence action and present evidence that Aerstigga and her followers have despoiled the lair or lied to the dragon. The following evidence captures Challidax's attention:

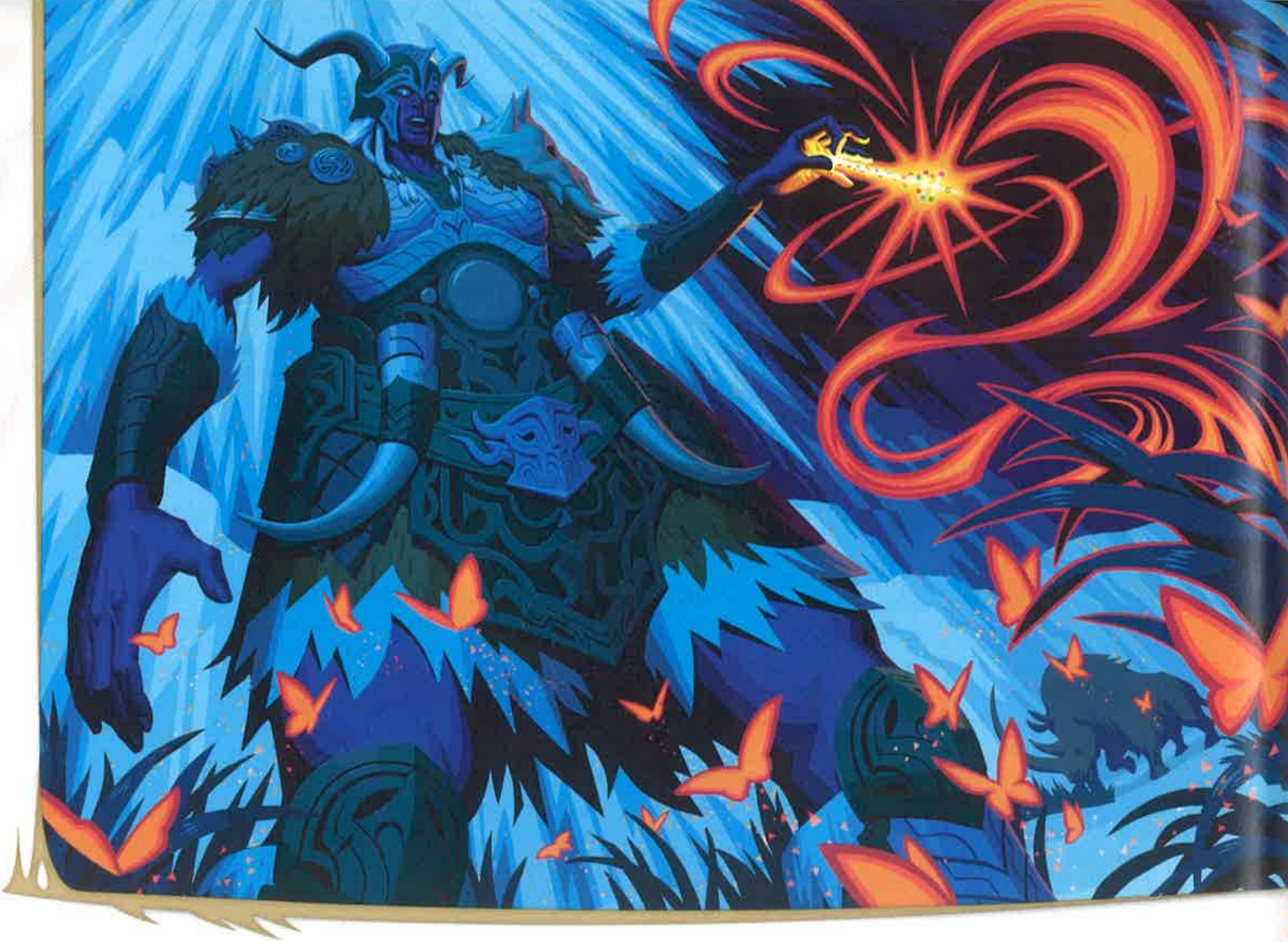
- Part of the frozen owlbear the giants broke in area D10
- Pieces of the broken healing crystal from area D11
- The *Wand of Wonder* Aerstigga has been hiding or evidence of its use, such as grass pulled from area D13 or the **Rhinoceros** from area D14

If the characters present at least two pieces of evidence to Challidax, she turns on Aerstigga. Once Aerstigga is defeated, the dragon allows the characters to depart her lair as thanks before leaving to hunt the other giants and their allies in her lair.

Should Challidax find that the characters have pilfered any of her trophies or treasures, she revokes her mercy and hunts them down to take revenge.

River. The river running through this room flows south to the chamber with the ledge (area D11; see "Lair Features").

Trophies. The alcoves here each contain a creature Challidax defeated and froze in ice. The creatures within are visible, but the ice around each is a Huge object with AC 13; HP 50; and Immunity to Cold, Poison, and Psychic damage. The trophies are as follows:



ED KWONG (2)

Northeast Alcove. This alcove contains the heavily scarred corpse of an abominable yeti. The yeti's left eye is a diamond worth 4,000 GP.

Northwest Alcove. This alcove contains the corpse of an enormous chimera in a ferocious pose.

South Alcove. This alcove contains the corpse of a halfling frozen to a Large, knight-like statue. If freed, the statue animates, revealing itself to be a **Shield Guardian** with a *Fireball* spell (level 4 version) stored. Unless it receives other commands from someone bearing the magic amulet it's bonded to (see area D7), the guardian fights the closest creature as it continues trying to protect its former controller, the halfling Deena Finkleton.

Southwest Alcove. This alcove contains the frozen corpse of the frost giant druid Elakdras. Once it's removed from the ice, the magical tattoos on the body are plainly visible. With 10 minutes of work, any character can copy the tattooed symbols using any appropriate recording implements, such as Ink, an Ink Pen, and a sheet of Parchment.

Treasure. Challidax's hoard includes the following treasure:

100 PP, 12,000 SP, and 200,000 CP (total value of 4,200 GP)
295 small gems in total (worth 1 GP each)
Platinum torc (worth 250 GP)
Two silver chalices (worth 120 GP each)
Bead of Force

Aerstigga keeps her *Wand of Wonder* concealed within her clothing, where Challidax can't observe it. If she doesn't pull it out during the fight, anyone searching her body discovers it.

Conclusion

Once the characters recover the ritual from Elakdras's corpse, they can return to Grahlista and attempt to break the oppressive heat wave. The frost giant's ritual requires at least four participants, takes a full day to perform, and consumes 1,000 GP of rare moss and crystals. Grahlista covers the cost of materials and leads the ritual, though she asks willing characters to participate.

Soon after the ritual's completion, a welcome rain begins falling, and the heat wave breaks. The locals are overjoyed and host a celebration for the characters. Within a few days, the region's weather returns to normal, thanks to the characters' daring.

A Remarkable Reward

If Challidax was slain during the adventure, the region around the dragon's lair rapidly thaws. Grahlista and an accomplished blacksmith named Tafarge make the characters an offer: if the characters give the pair all the coins from Challidax's lair (to disperse among the locals), the dragon's body, and three months, Grahlista and Tafarge promise to make the party a remarkable reward. The two won't say what or push the matter, but if the characters agree, hold up their end of the bargain, and return after three months, the pair give the party a *Frost Brand* with Shivering Death's visage sculpted into the pommel. The magic weapon is a type of weapon used by a party member of your choice.

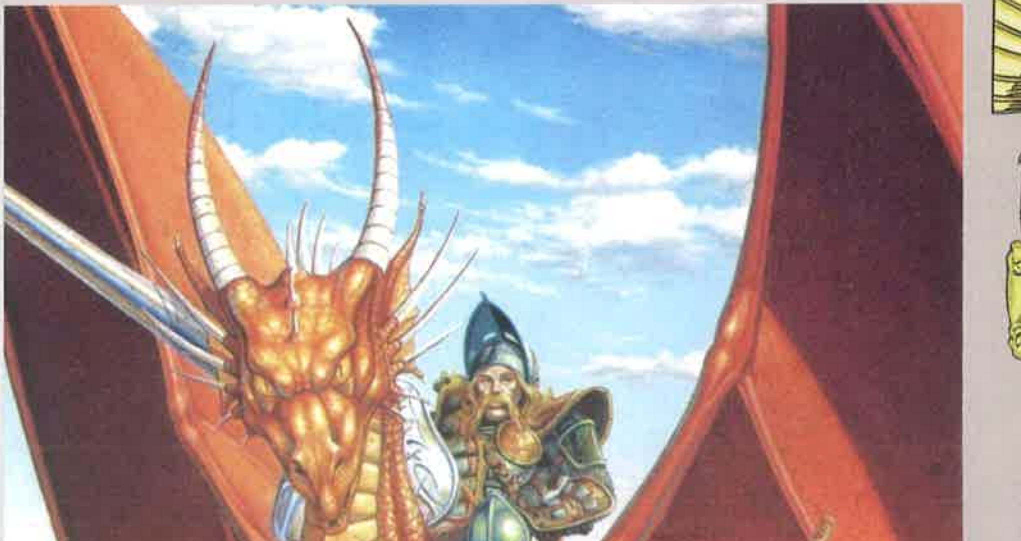
FORESHADOWED FLAMES

The origins of the heat wave in this adventure remain purposely vague. The scorching weather could be a natural occurrence, but more sinister forces could play a part. If you want to link the heat wave to other threats, add evidence to the trophy cave (area D16).

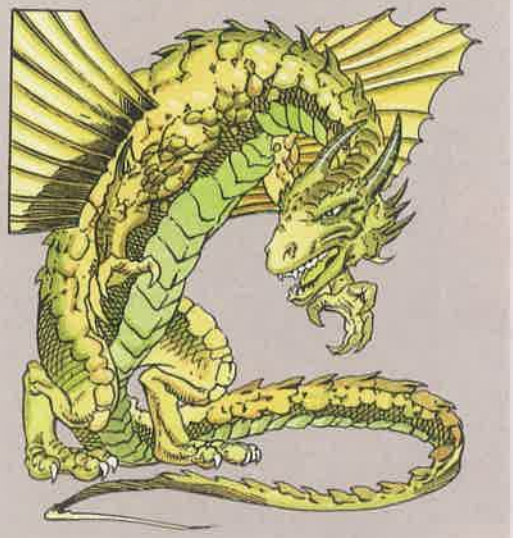
HISTORY OF

COPPER DRAGONS

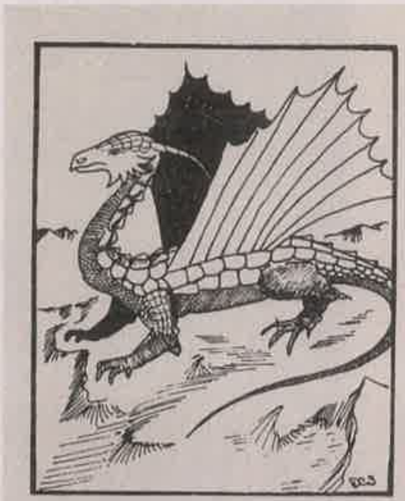
Two long horns and prominent cheek frills are consistent elements of the copper dragon's look throughout D&D's history. These features make it clear that Lord Gunthar is riding a copper dragon on Larry Elmore's cover for the 1985 adventure *Dragons of Deceit.*



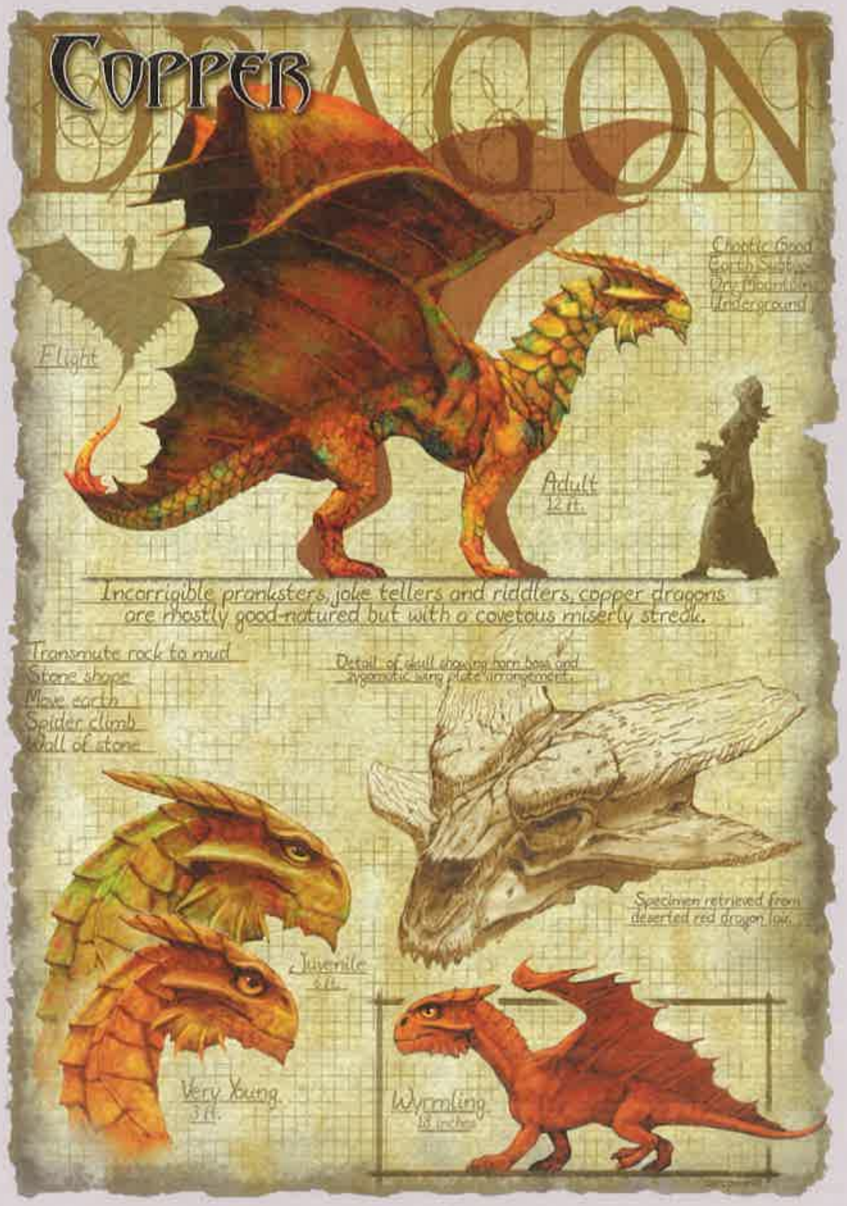
Dragons of Deceit (1985)
Artist: Larry Elmore



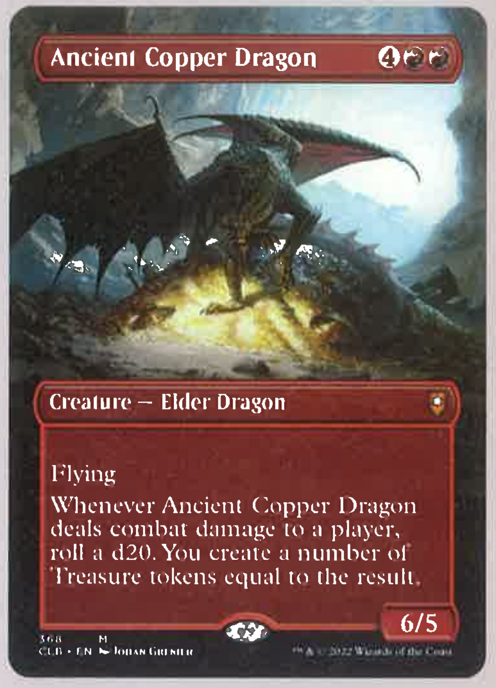
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


Copper
Dragon
Chaotic Good
Earth Subtype
Dry Mountains
Underground
Flight
Adult
12 ft.
Incorrigible pranksters, joke tellers and riddlers, copper dragons are mostly good-natured but with a covetous miserly streak.
Transmute rock to mud
Stone shape
Move earth
Spider climb
Wall of stone
Detail of skull showing horn boss and zygomatic wing plate arrangement.
Specimen retrieved from deserted red dragon lair.
Juvenile
6 ft.
Very Young
3 ft.
Wyrmling
18 inches

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



Ancient Copper Dragon 4

Creature — Elder Dragon

Flying

Whenever Ancient Copper Dragon deals combat damage to a player, roll a d20. You create a number of Treasure tokens equal to the result.

6/5

368 M
CLB • EN Johan Grenier

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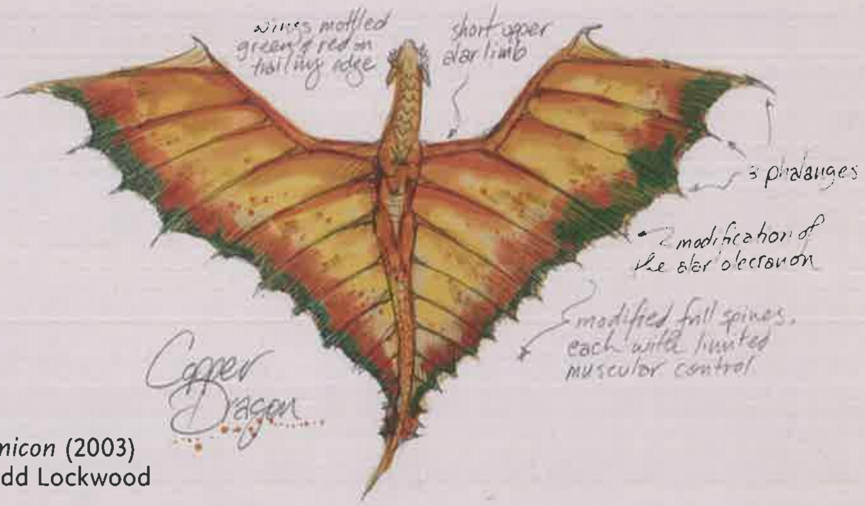
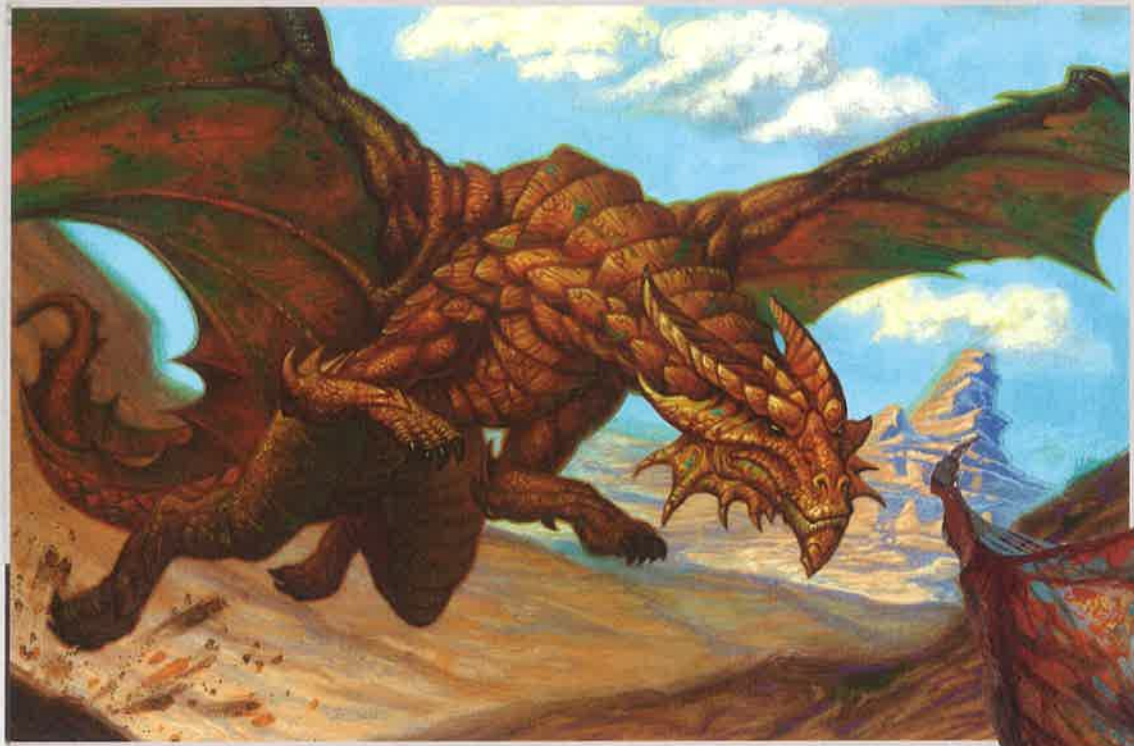
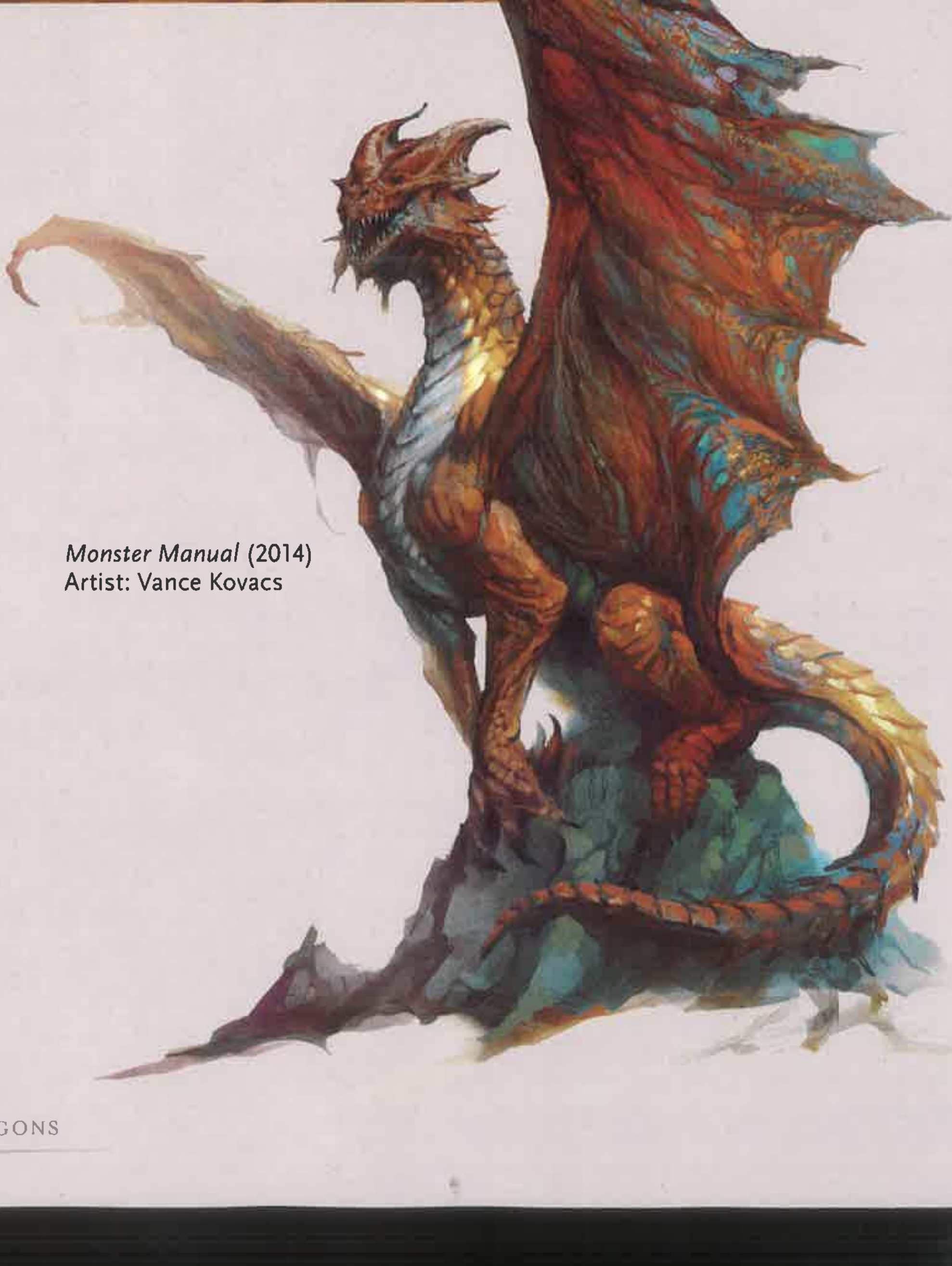
Commander Legends: Battle for Baldur's Gate (2022)
Artist: Johan Grenier


wings mottled green & red on trailing edge
short upper alar limb
3 phalanges
modification of the alar olecranon
modified tail spines, each with limited muscular control
Copper Dragon

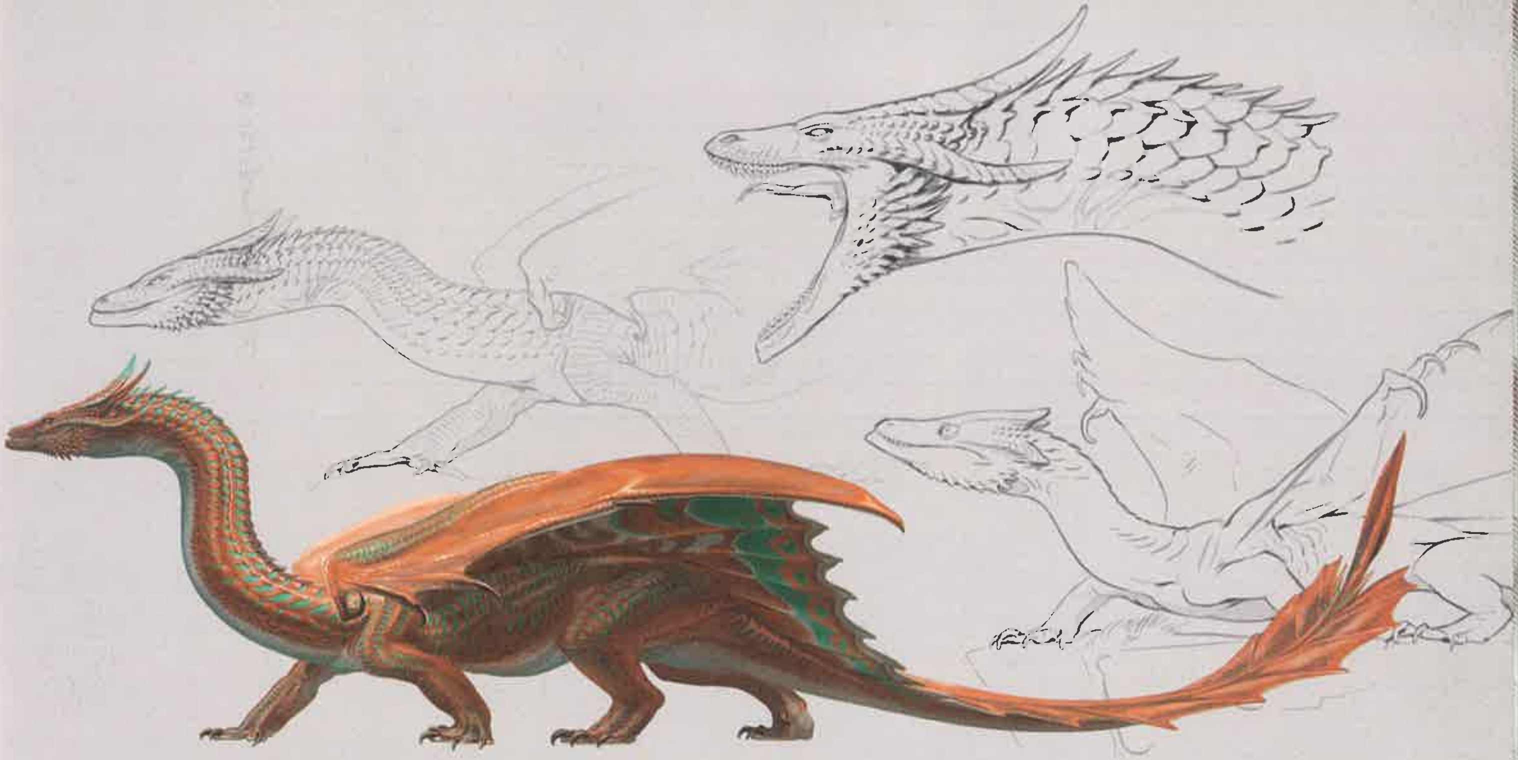
Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



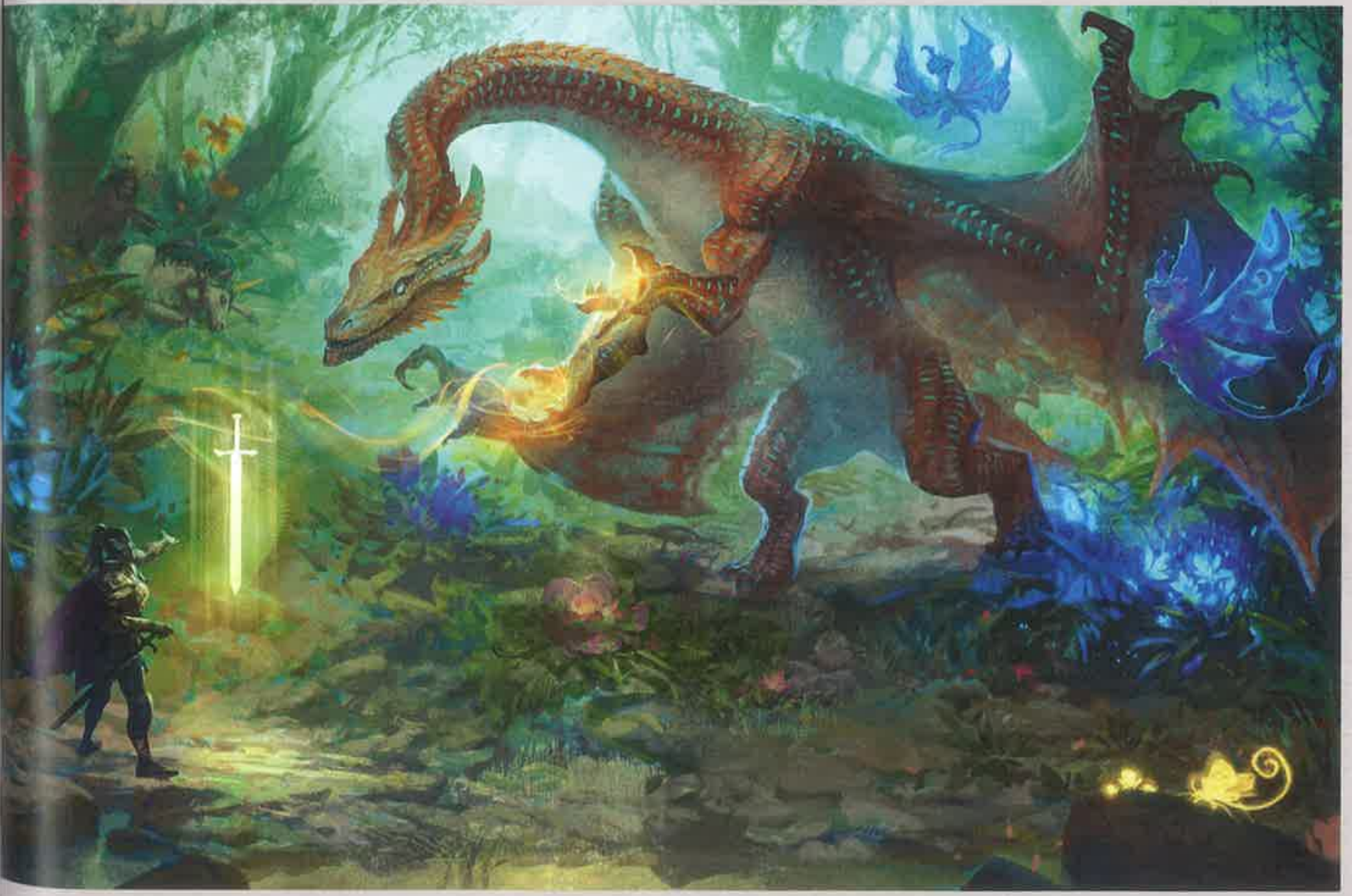
Monster Manual 2 (2009)
Artist: Chris Seaman



Monster Manual (2014)
Artist: Vance Kovacs



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Svetlin Velinov

CHAPTER 9

A Copper for a Song

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 12
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN ANY COASTAL TOWN WITH NEARBY FARMLAND AND HILLS.

This adventure takes place in Godsbreath, a D&D setting introduced in *Journeys Through the Radiant Citadel*. You don't need that book to run this adventure, however; you can place it in any similar setting.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Deciphering Clues. The adventurers undertake a quest to find the lost verses of a magical song that can rejuvenate the soil of a dying land. The characters must decipher clues hidden in another song's lyrics with the help of chatty locals.

Braving the Rattle. Having learned where the lost verses are, the characters travel to a copper dragon's lair in the hills of a region called the Rattle.

Navigating Nakari's Lair. The characters must convince Nakari, the copper dragon, to hand over the verses. Failing that, they can try to take the verses by force or learn them from a source hidden within the dragon's lair.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. If you're running the adventure for a single adventurer, read the "Running for One Character" section.

Step 2. Read "Adventure Background" for more context and familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table, which describes important individuals the characters will interact with throughout the adventure.

Step 3. Make a copy of the Copper for a Song handout for each player. (You will share it with them shortly after the adventure starts.)

Step 4. Bookmark the following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Axe Beak, Giant
Commoner
Copper Dragon, Adult
Djinni
Druid
Galeb Duhr
Green Dragon Wyrmling
Hill Giant
Kobold, Winged
Performer
Performer Maestro
Priest Acolyte
Purple Worm
Warrior Veteran

KEY NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Aunt Dellie	Human boat pilot	**Commoner** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	"Listening Post"
Gleem Happenbolt	Dead gnome miner	—	N14
Hurch Henley	Human street magician	**Performer** (Small)	"Listening Post"
Kelra Ironweaver	Dwarf blacksmith	**Commoner** (Medium, Chaotic Neutral)	"Listening Post"
Lashlo	Impatient guest of Nakari	**Djinni**	N10
Nakari	Keeper of the lost verses	**Adult Copper Dragon**	N17
Retta and Rynn	Wyrmlings adopted by Nakari	**Green Dragon Wyrmling** (Neutral)	N17
Taelyn	Elf soldier	**Warrior Veteran** (Medium, Neutral Good)	"Listening Post"
Tungsten Ward	Human quest giver	**Priest Acolyte** (Medium, Lawful Good)	"Listening Post"
Yemi Moonsybil	Potential human ally under the effects of a *Sequester* spell	**Performer Maestro** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	N12
Zakia	Human herbalist	**Druid** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	"Listening Post"

JABARI WEATHERS

Running for One Character

You can run this adventure for a single character of level 12. A Bard is a good choice, given the role that music and storytelling play in the adventure. Ideally, the character should have proficiency in at least two of the following skills:

- Deception
- Intimidation
- Perception
- Performance
- Persuasion
- Stealth

The solo character gains the *Blessing of the Lone Champion* (see the introduction) to compensate for the lack of companions.

Adventure Background

The region of Godsbreath is known for its crimson earth, but the soil has grown depleted in recent years. Even as locals develop new ways to farm, the harvest produces less food each year, and the region grows closer to crisis.

Many believe that the key to restoring the soil lies in the verses of the *Awakening Song*, a collection that forms a record of the region's history. Some of the verses have been lost for generations. Recently, an acolyte named Proclaimer Tungsten Ward learned from an old man about another acolyte who wrote down the verses of the *Awakening Song* to preserve them. But the old man couldn't remember the acolyte's name and doesn't know what became of the written verses.

The Verses

Unknown to the people of Godsbreath, the lost verses now belong to an adult copper dragon named Nakari. She has lived in the rugged hills of the Rattle, an unsettled region north of Godsbreath, since before the first human settlers arrived to till the crimson soil.

Nakari liked to visit the settlers in human guise and learn their stories, songs, and ways. When she learned that an acolyte had dutifully written down the verses of the *Awakening Song*, Nakari convinced the acolyte to sell her the record for a single copper coin and the promise that she would never let them fall into the wrong hands.

Beginning the Adventure

When you're ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

> A long voyage has brought you to Nightwater Cove. The town of Promise rises from the shore, its brightly painted buildings a welcome sight. The vessel docks, allowing you and the other passengers to disembark.
>
> The bustling harbor town rests on the southern coast of Godsbreath, a region known for its agriculture. Sadly, its farmlands have become depleted in recent years. The struggle to survive grows ever more dire, and this year's harvest is expected to be the poorest in recent memory. Locals believe they could rejuvenate the soil with the *Awakening Song*, whose ancient verses recount the history of the land and its people, but key verses have been lost.
>
> Several weeks ago, you received an invitation from Proclaimer Tungsten Ward, an acolyte who works at a temple in Promise called the Listening Post. Proclaimer Ward hopes you can find the lost verses of the *Awakening Song*, giving the people of Godsbreath the means to rejuvenate their dying soil.

When the characters head to the temple, proceed to "Listening Post."

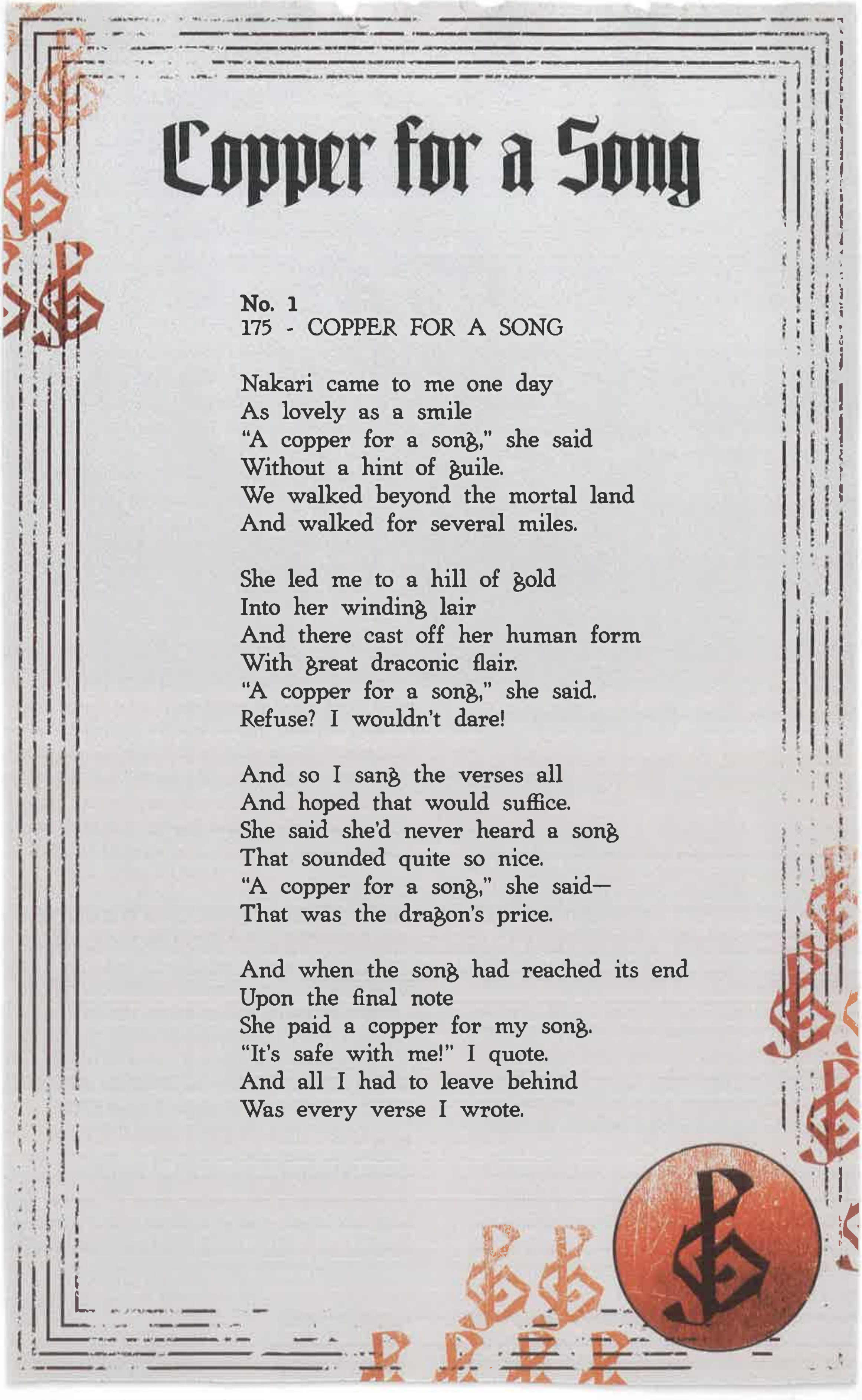
Listening Post

When the characters arrive at the Listening Post, describe it as follows:

> The Listening Post is both a gathering place and a temple. Inside its colorful walls, small crowds are gathered around storytelling booths, a community bulletin board, and a trading hub.
>
> A human near the far wall waves at you and begins weaving through the crowd with scrolls tucked under one arm. You recognize Proclaimer Tungsten Ward. Slight of stature and neatly dressed in scholar's garb of purple and gold, Proclaimer Ward greets you in a soft voice and says, "The gods have delivered you safely. For that and many other things, I am grateful." They then hand each of you a scroll.

Proclaimer Tungsten Ward (Medium, Lawful Good **Priest Acolyte**) gives each character a nonmagical scroll with lyrics written on it in Common.

Give each player a copy of the Copper for a Song handout at this time and invite one or more of them to read the song lyrics aloud.



Copper for a Song

No. 1
175 - COPPER FOR A SONG

Nakari came to me one day
As lovely as a smile
"A copper for a song," she said
Without a hint of guile.
We walked beyond the mortal land
And walked for several miles.

She led me to a hill of gold
Into her winding lair
And there cast off her human form
With great draconic flair.
"A copper for a song," she said.
Refuse? I wouldn't dare!

And so I sang the verses all
And hoped that would suffice.
She said she'd never heard a song
That sounded quite so nice.
"A copper for a song," she said—
That was the dragon's price.

And when the song had reached its end
Upon the final note
She paid a copper for my song.
"It's safe with me!" I quote.
And all I had to leave behind
Was every verse I wrote.

Handout: Copper for a Song

PAOLO VACALA

Proclaimer Ward's Quest

When the characters are ready to learn more from Proclaimer Ward, read or paraphrase the following:

> "Stories and songs are the lifeblood of Godsbreath," says the young acolyte, "and the *Awakening Song* is woven from the stories of Godsbreath's first settlers and their descendants.
>
> "Since I contacted you about my quest to find the lost verses of the *Awakening Song*, I learned that another acolyte had filled a book with the song's lost verses. This happened so long ago, the acolyte is surely dead and mostly forgotten.
>
> "The scroll I gave you holds 'Copper for a Song,' a song they wrote describing an encounter with a dragon named Nakari. Within these lyrics are clues to finding the lost verses of the *Awakening Song*, I'm sure of it.
>
> "I've gathered people here to help decipher the clues in 'Copper for a Song.' We need your help. And when we discover where the verses are, I'll need you to retrieve them."

Reward

If the characters demand a reward, Proclaimer Ward offers to give them a *Figurine of Wondrous Power* (onyx dog) once they recover the lost verses of the *Awakening Song*. The figurine occasionally serves as a temple guardian, but Proclaimer Ward is willing to part with it.

Listening Post Conversations

Proclaimer Ward steers the characters to a small group of other people in the Listening Post to workshop the clues buried in the "Copper for a Song" lyrics. Proclaimer Ward introduces them to the five other group members and provides basic details about each person, described below.

Each of these five individuals is initially Indifferent toward the characters. A character who takes an Influence action and strikes up a conversation with one of them can make a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check to try to shift the person's attitude from Indifferent to Friendly. Alternatively, a character can try to improve a person's attitude with a different ability check. For example, a character can attempt a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to impress Hurch with a coin trick or an Intelligence (Nature) check to impress Zakia with knowledge about rare herbs or monsters.

A person who is Friendly toward a character helps decipher clues in the song lyrics and imparts the information below when shown the scroll.

Aunt Dellie

Aunt Dellie (Medium, Chaotic Good **Commoner**) is a human skimmer boat pilot with a skeptical mind, a soft heart, a loud laugh, and a talent for learning a bit about everyone's business. She wears a simple yellow dress and keeps her hair short.

When Friendly, Aunt Dellie shares the following: "Past the farms of the Ribbon is a wild, unsettled land called the Rattle. We sometimes call its bald hills 'hills of gold' because of their color. The phrase 'beyond the settled land' must refer to the Rattle—a land of monsters."

Hurch Henley

Hurch Henley (Small **Performer**) is a human street magician whose attempts at card tricks and legerdemain are less interesting than his stories from when he worked on his father's farm. He wears a floppy straw hat and a loose vest.

When Friendly, Hurch shares the following: "Father sold a few pigs to a copper-haired witch named Nakari. She said she lived four miles inside the Rattle, but Father thought she was joking. 'The Rattle is too evil a place for people to live,' he used to tell me."

Kelra Ironweaver

Kelra Ironweaver (Medium, Chaotic Neutral **Commoner**) is a local dwarf blacksmith who has outlived five husbands and knows a lot about history because she was there when it happened. Her hair cascades in thick ringlets over her broad shoulders.

When Friendly, Kelra shares the following: "My first husband, Irvin, was a copper miner in the Rattle. He claimed a dragon lived under a hill not far from the mine. Poor Irvin—flattened by a hill giant!"

Taelyn

Taelyn (Medium, Neutral Good **Warrior Veteran**) is an elf soldier with a Tiny blue finch perched on the right shoulder of her green cloak. She barters for supplies at the Listening Post's trading hub.

When Friendly, Taelyn shares the following: "Last spring, a bulette terrorized farms at the north end of the Ribbon. One day, out of the blue, a copper dragon swooped down and dissolved the bulette with its acid breath, saving a farmer's life."

Zakia

Zakia (Medium, Chaotic Good **Druid**) is a local human herbalist who uses one of the storytelling booths to spook young children with tales about dragons and child-eating monsters. Her blue dress is stained with dirt from her gardens, and a bag she wears slung over her shoulder is overflowing with aromatic plants.

When Friendly, Zakia shares the following: "If a copper dragon is what you seek, that's mostly good

JABARI WEATHERS

news. Copper dragons are even-tempered but also miserly. They're as fond of music, jokes, and riddles as they are of treasure. Their burrows are often sinuous, winding, and riddled with secret doors."

Putting It Together

After conversing with the townsfolk in the Listening Post, the characters should have enough information to find the dragon's lair, which is located in the Rattle, 4 miles past the Ribbon, under a hill near an old copper mine.

The Rattle

Map 9.1 shows the location of Nakari's lair, roughly 12 miles northeast of Promise in the Rattle as the dragon flies, or 20 miles along the winding northern road. The area is shaped by the presence of a copper dragon's lair, as described in the *Monster Manual*.

Danger in the Hills

To get to the Rattle, the characters must cross the stretch of farmland called the Ribbon.

Read or paraphrase the following to describe the journey into the Rattle:

> The journey from Promise leads north through the Ribbon, where farmhouses dot the dark-red ground between stands of trees. Eventually, the road dwindles to a track. The farms grow fewer and farther between as you approach the Rattle.
>
> After about four miles, the trees give way to rocky hills of a golden-brown hue. The entrance of an old copper mine is blocked with boulders and serves as a landmark. Sprawled nearby is a huge, partly dissolved monster with its guts ripped out. The dead monster lies on its armored back with its four clawed feet in the air. From deeper in the hills come the sounds of loud belching and guttural laughter.

The copper mine contains nothing of interest. A character can take the Study action and make a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check to identify the dead monster, recognizing it as a bulette on a success.

As a Search action, a character can inspect the dead bulette and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a success, the character determines that the creature died from intense acid and then was partially eaten by an enormous predator.

After finding the bulette, the characters might follow the sounds of belching and laughter (see "Hill Giant Camp" or might reconnoiter the area (see "Tunnels to the Dragon's Lair"). Use the "Surface" half of map 9.2 for either approach.

Hill Giant Camp

If the characters follow the sounds coming from the hills, read or paraphrase the following:

> Six hill giants relax in a clearing between rocky outcroppings. Crystalline deposits in the rock glitter brightly, but the giants seem oblivious to the natural beauty of their surroundings. They sit in a rough circle, belching and laughing loudly. Two equally enormous flightless birds with axe-like beaks shift restlessly nearby.
>
> Several of the outcroppings have ten-foot-wide tunnels bored into them. The giants pay no attention to these tunnels.

Use the "Surface" half of map 9.2 for this encounter. The characters approach from the east.

The glittering crystalline formations in the rock drew Nakari to this area. These crystals are pretty but not valuable.

Hill Giants. The six **Hill Giants** are Hostile and unaware that they're camping above the subterranean lair of a copper dragon. Their two **Giant Axe Beaks** serve as beasts of burden and hunting companions, and they fight at the giants' command.

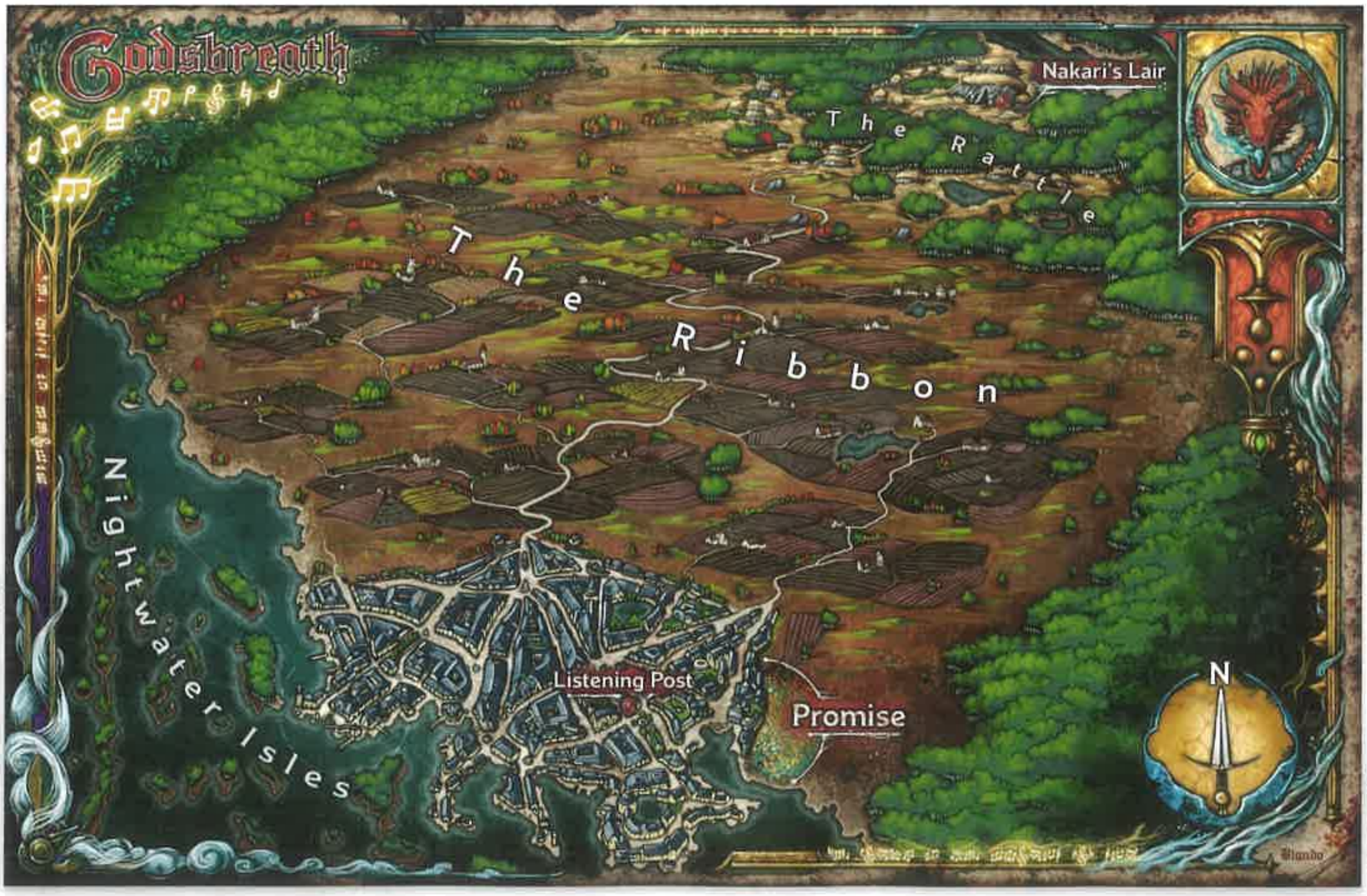
As an Influence action, a character can attempt one of the following:

Bribery. A character can try to befriend a giant by giving it at least 10 pounds of food, 5 gallons of water or ale, or 50 GP worth of treasure. The character makes a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, the attitude of the giant shifts to Indifferent. The other giants demand similar payment; if the character refuses, the Hostile giants begin combat. On a failure, the Hostile giants begin combat.

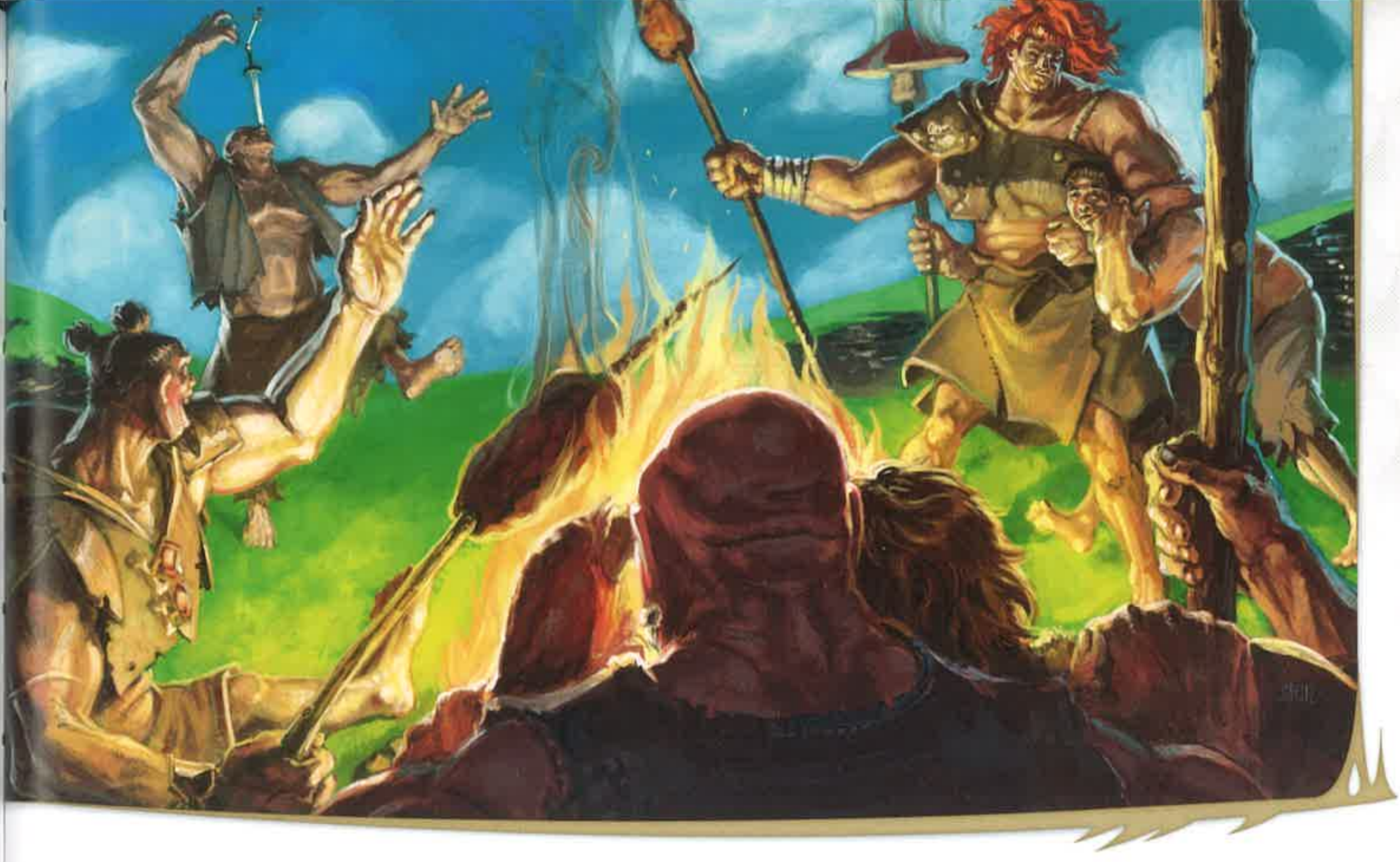
Fear. A character who knows Giant can try to frighten the giants by telling them about the dragon who lives nearby. The character makes a DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) check. On a success, one pair of giants leaves and never returns. On a failure, Hostile giants begin combat.

Performance. A character can try to amuse the giants with music, dancing, juggling, capering, loud belching, or some other performance. The character makes a DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check. If the check succeeds, the giants' attitudes toward

Map 9.1: Godsbreath



JARED BLANDO



that character shift to Friendly, and their attitudes toward the other characters shift to Indifferent. On a failure, Hostile giants begin combat.

Treasure. The six giants share three enormous bags to store their loot:

Sack 1

35 GP, 270 SP, and 1,800 CP
Five wheels of stinky cheese
Dire wolf's skull

Sack 2

Rusty Dagger (which the giants use as a toothpick)
180 SP and 2,200 CP
Unopened cask of honey mead (worth 50 GP)
Beehive with live bees

Sack 3

150 SP and 2,500 CP
Haunch of smoked meat
Smelly, giant-size sandal
+2 Shield (which the giants use as a saucer)

Tunnels to the Dragon's Lair

Characters who reconnoiter the area notice four tunnel entrances (marked on the "Surface" half of map 9.2), all of which lead down to the dragon's lair. The tunnels are too small for the giants to enter comfortably, so they don't even try.

JAHARI WEATHERS

The entrances to tunnels N1 and N2 lie within the giants' line of sight; reaching either tunnel without being noticed requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. Rocky outcroppings hide the entrances to tunnels N3 and N4 from the giants' view.

Nakari's Lair

Nakari is in her lair when the characters arrive, raising a pair of green dragon wyrmlings she recently adopted; see her den (area N17) for details. Nakari is initially Indifferent toward intruders.

Lair Features

Nakari's lair is a network of tunnels and caves hewn from solid rock. Other features of the lair are summarized below.

Ambient Music

While Nakari is in her lair, soft music permeates the area. The music, which blends woodwinds and bells, is faint and has no discernible source.

Breakaway Roofs

Where denoted in area descriptions, certain parts of the lair have 5-foot-thick breakaway roofs that any creature with a Burrow Speed can break through to create an opening to the surface. As a Search action, a character who examines a breakaway roof can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the character can tell that the roof has been structurally weakened but is in no danger of collapsing on its own. A character with Tremorsense has Advantage on this check.

Ceilings

Ceilings are 10 feet high throughout the lair.

Laughing Gas

Areas tinted purple on map 9.2 are filled with magical laughing gas that is visually imperceptible but smells like candy. Any creature other than Nakari that enters the gas-filled area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the Incapacitated condition until the start of its next turn, as it laughs uncontrollably.

A strong wind (such as that created by *Gust of Wind*) disperses the gas for 1 minute, while *Dispel Magic* disperses the gas for 24 hours. The gas dissipates if Nakari dies.

Lighting

The lair is in Darkness. Nakari and other denizens rely on Darkvision to see. Descriptions assume the characters have a way of seeing in the dark.

Secret Doors

All secret doors in Nakari's lair are magical and marked on the map. Each secret door blends seamlessly with the surrounding wall (DC 20 to notice). Nakari can open any secret door as a Bonus Action from anywhere in her lair, causing the stone to reshape into an opening wide enough for her to pass through. Other creatures must break through the stone secret door. Whenever a creature with an Intelligence of 3 or higher comes within 10 feet of a secret door, Nakari becomes aware of the creature's presence and location but takes no immediate action.

Lair Locations

The following locations are keyed to the "Underground" half of map 9.2.

N1: East Entrance

> Ethereal music travels up this dark, sloping tunnel.

This tunnel slopes down to area N6. A branching tunnel leads to area N5.

N2: South Entrance

This area is identical to the east entrance (area N1), except the tunnel slopes down to area N8.

N3: North Entrance

This area is identical to the east entrance (area N1), except the tunnel slopes down to area N11.

N4: West Entrance

This area is identical to the east entrance (area N1), except the tunnel slopes down to area N13.

N5: Eastern Boulder Cave

> Several boulders are scattered about this small cave, and three of them raise their heads to look at you as you enter. Crooked grins full of rocky teeth appear in their faces as the creatures rumble what might be a greeting.

Three gregarious **Galeb Duhr** dwell in this cave. They are pleased to have company, and ask in Primordial if the characters want to join them in a game of rock tossing. If the characters don't understand their words, the galeb duhr try to get the idea across through pantomime. The goal of the game is to hurl enormous, 200-pound rocks to land as close as possible to a target on the ground. If the characters refuse to play, the galeb duhr are disappointed and return to their rest.

Development. The **Hill Giants** outside the dragon's lair notice the sounds of rock tossing or combat in this cave. If the giants aren't aware of the characters' presence, one giant investigates, situating itself outside the tunnel to area N1 for 10 minutes to find out if anything emerges.

N6: Kobold Cave

As the characters approach this cave, high-pitched chatter issues from within. Characters who know Draconic discern the following phrases in that language:

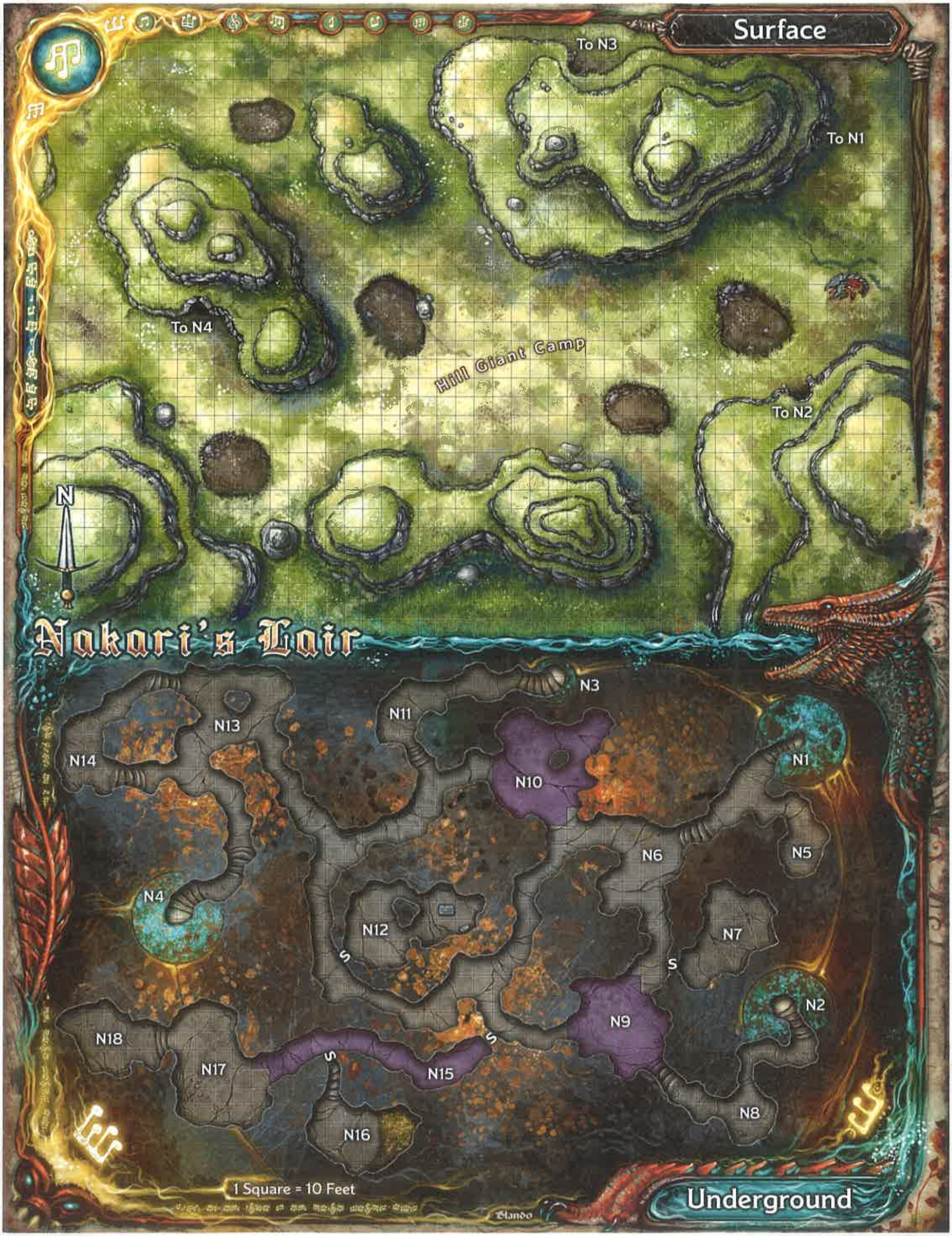
- "Nakari will be pleased."
- "Too much clay! The wings will break!"
- "The tail is too long."

The cave inhabitants stop talking if the characters have a light source with them or otherwise don't mask their approach.

When the characters enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

> Seven kobolds with leathery wings are making a statue out of clay in the middle of this cave, which has exits to the northwest, south, and east. The statue, about five feet tall and eight feet long, bears a passing resemblance to a dragon.

JARED BLANDO


Surface
To N3
To N1
To N4
Hill Giant Camp
To N2
N
Nakari's Lair
N3
N11
N13
N14
N10
N1
N6
N5
N4
N12
S
N7
S
N2
N9
N18
S
S
N17
N15
N8
N16
1 Square = 10 Feet
Underground
Blando

Map 9.2: Nakari's Lair

The seven **Winged Kobolds** want to impress Nakari with their artistic skills and thus win her favor. The kobolds' names are Drix, Grox, Kex, Mox, Nix, Prax, and Zox.

Roleplaying the Kobolds. The kobolds are initially Indifferent toward the characters. One or more characters can shift the kobolds' attitudes to Friendly by helping them finish the statue (see "Sculpting the Statue") or by giving them treasure or worthless trinkets that easily could be mistaken for treasure.

If the kobolds' attitude shifts to Friendly, the kobolds impart the following information in conversation with the characters:

Nakari. The copper dragon, Nakari, loves art. The kobolds hope she will appreciate the clay statue they've crafted for her. The kobolds don't know where the dragon keeps her hoard; they've had no luck finding it.

Secret Doors. Nakari's lair contains secret doors that the kobolds have witnessed the dragon open magically. (The kobolds can lead characters to the secret doors concealing areas N7, N12, and N15, but the kobolds can't open them. The kobolds are unaware of the secret door concealing area N16, having never visited that part of the lair.)

Wyrmlings. Nakari rescued a pair of wyrmlings from the nearby forest and is raising them as her own. Both wyrmlings have tried to murder the kobolds more than once. (The kobolds don't know the wyrmlings' names.)

Sculpting the Statue. The statue is meant to depict an adult copper dragon but needs a lot of work. A character who spends at least 10 minutes resculpting part of the statue makes a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. Each successful check improves one of four sections of the statue: the head, the wings, the body, or the tail. Once all four sections are improved, the kobolds are satisfied, praise the characters' artistic abilities, and become Friendly.

Treasure. Each kobold has a Pouch that contains 1d12 CP.

N7: Molting Cave

This cave lies hidden behind a secret door (see "Lair Features").

> This dark cave has no other exits. Scattered over the floor are molted copper dragon scales. Toward the back of the cave lie three small piles of treasure. Someone has carved a word in Draconic into the floor next to each pile.

Nakari keeps her shed scales here.

Breakaway Roof. Nakari has carefully weakened the cave's roof so she can burrow through it quickly to reach the surface (see "Lair Features").

Treasure. Nakari has gathered an assortment of baubles into three neat piles labeled in Draconic: "keep," "trade," and "dump." Many of these items were gifts from travelers or admirers; the remaining items the dragon acquired during her efforts to better understand and appreciate her neighbors.

The first time anyone other than Nakari removes an item from the "keep" or "trade" pile, the copper scales on the floor suddenly swirl through the air, slashing creatures with their sharp edges. Each creature in the cave makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) Slashing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. This magical effect can be triggered only once.

Each pile's contents are listed below:

KEEP PILE

Bagpipes (worth 30 GP)
Ten Books of poetry (worth 25 GP each)
Twenty Holy Symbols (amulets worth 5 GP each) representing various faiths
Framed painting (worth 7,500 GP) of a silver-haired, golden-eyed aasimar whose facial expression, attire, and hairstyle magically change daily at dawn
Eight music boxes (worth 250 GP each)
Twenty gold rings (worth 25 GP each)

TRADE PILE

Ten Books (historical texts worth 25 GP each)
Five flutes (worth 2 GP each)
Bejeweled, fur-lined cloak fit for royalty (worth 2,500 GP)
Ten gold rings (worth 25 GP each)
Fifty sheets of music (worth 1 GP each)

DUMP PILE

Five Books of poetry (worth 25 GP each)
Drum that's battered and worn (worth 1 GP)
Lute with two broken strings (worth 15 GP as is or 35 GP if repaired with a *Mending* spell)
Three-dragon ante Gaming Set (worth 1 GP)
Ten gold bracelets (worth 25 GP each)
Ten silver rings (worth 5 GP each)
Rolled-up, torn portrait of a famous tiefling musician (worth 750 GP if repaired with a *Mending* spell)

N8: Southern Boulder Cave

> Several boulders are scattered about this cave, and the ground vibrates slightly beneath you.

This cave appears to hold nine boulders, but three are **Galeb Duhr** that are singing while rolled up. Their song is quiet but deep and resonant, causing vibrations in the floor. If the galeb duhr notice the characters, they lift their heads and begin singing more loudly, shaking the ground and making bits of gravel fall from the ceiling as they try to entertain their unexpected audience. When the characters leave, the galeb duhr return to their quieter song.

Development. The **Hill Giants** outside the dragon's lair notice the galeb duhr's loud singing. If the giants aren't aware of the characters' presence, one giant investigates, situating itself outside the tunnel to area N2 for 10 minutes to find out if anything emerges.

N9: Laughing Cave

> This empty cave smells like candy. It has exits to the west, north, and southeast.

Breakaway Roof. Nakari has carefully weakened the roof of this cave so she can burrow through it quickly to reach the surface (see "Lair Features").

Laughing Gas. This area is filled with magical laughing gas (see "Lair Features").

N10: Reception Cave

> This oddly shaped cave smells like candy and has exits to the west and southeast. An alcove in the northeast corner is arrayed with colorful cushions, and a towering, purple-skinned woman in luxurious silk clothing lounges there, holding a golden chalice.

A peevish **Djinni** named Lashlo rests in the alcove. A guest that Nakari has left waiting far too long, Lashlo hoped to trade stories and songs with Nakari, but her patience is nearly at an end. She is Hostile to the characters, whom she considers rivals for Nakari's attention, and she fights them if they aren't effusively polite. If any character succumbs to the laughing gas for 2 consecutive rounds, Lashlo assumes they're laughing at her and fights them. The genie is unaffected by the laughing gas.

Laughing Gas. This cave is filled with laughing gas (see "Lair Features").

Treasure. The chalice belongs to Nakari, but the dragon won't notice its absence, and it's worth 750 GP. If the genie dies, her body dissolves into mist, leaving behind her silk clothing (worth 250 GP), two black pearl gemstones (worth 500 GP each), and a *Wand of Lightning Bolts*.

N11: Northern Boulder Cave

> Several boulders lie scattered about this cave. As you enter, three of them raise their heads to look at you. They motion frantically for you to be quiet.

Three **Galeb Duhr** dwell in this cave. They are desperate to avoid the unwelcome attention of Lashlo, the djinni in area N10, and try to remain as silent as possible.

Development. The galeb duhr's caution is unwarranted. Noise in this cave doesn't attract the attention of the djinni or of the giants outside the dragon's lair.

N12: Maestro's Cave

This cave lies hidden behind a secret door (see "Lair Features").

> This cave appears to be empty. At the back, two narrow tunnels wrap around a pillar of rock, leading to a smaller cave to the east. In the middle of that cave rests a slab of granite that measures three feet wide, eight feet long, and two feet high.

The western half of the cave is indeed empty (but see "Breakaway Roof" below). An Invisible creature lies on the stone slab in the smaller cave to the east (see "Sequestered Maestro").

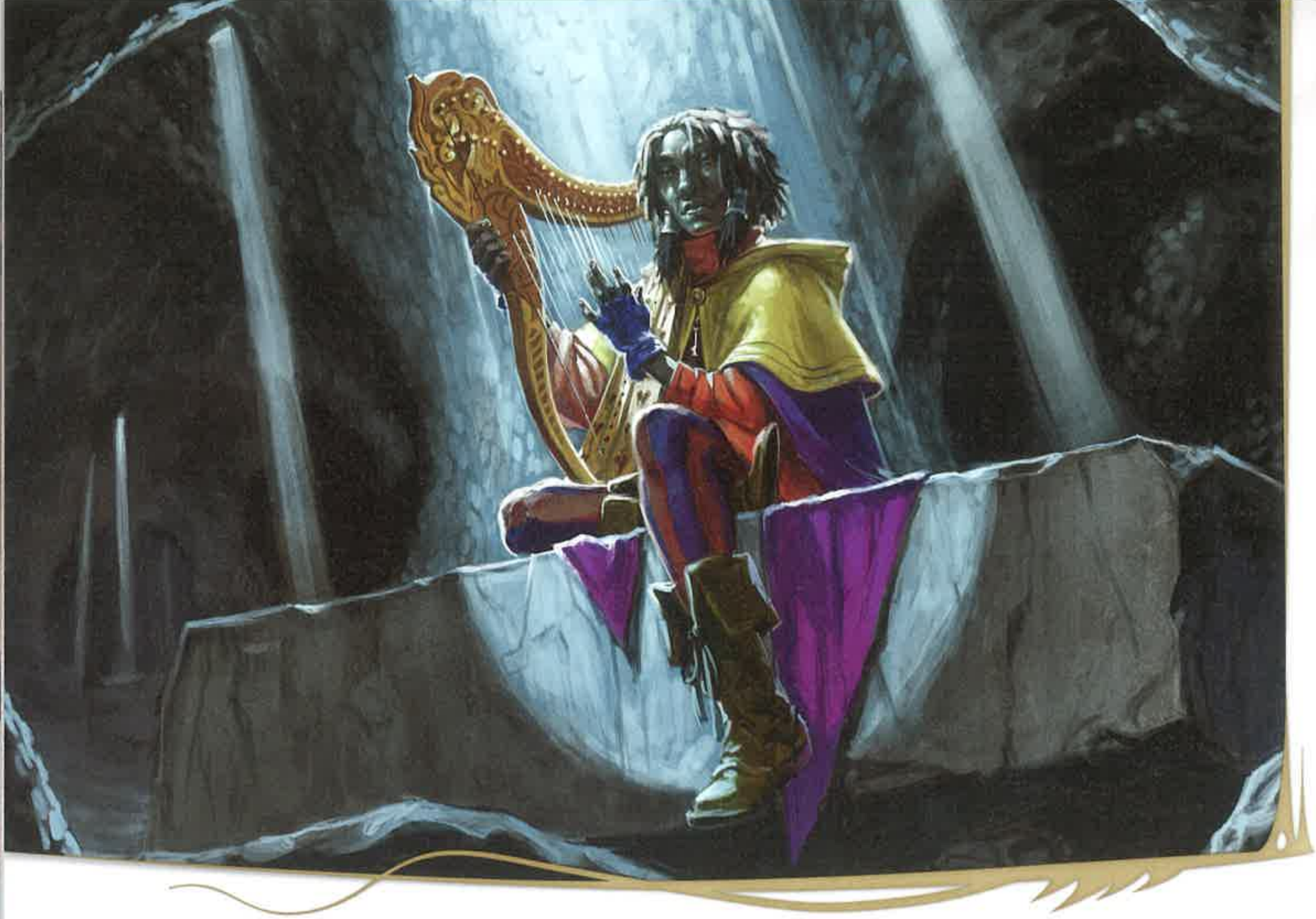
Breakaway Roof. Nakari has carefully weakened the roof in the western half of this cave so she can burrow through it quickly to reach the surface (see "Lair Features").

Sequestered Maestro. Lying atop the stone slab is the human Yemi Moonsybil (Medium, Chaotic Good **Performer Maestro**). Yemi has the Invisible condition and is in a state of suspended animation, both courtesy of a *Sequester* spell. Nakari keeps dust and other detritus from accumulating on the slab and Yemi's resting form.

Yemi wears a glass key keepsake on a copper chain around her neck, and she gently clasps an *Instrument of the Bards* (Ollamh harp), which she acquired in her youth. Taking the harp, plucking one of its strings, or removing the glass key from around Yemi's neck ends the *Sequester* spell early.

Yemi, who has been in stasis for almost a century, looks to be in her fifties. She knows all the lost verses of the Awakening Song.

Once she is no longer under the *Sequester* spell's effect, Yemi is hungry for news. If the characters explain their quest, she sympathizes with the dire



situation in Godsbreath and agrees to share the lost verses of the Awakening Song and return to Promise. However, Yemi won't leave Nakari's lair without first saying goodbye to the dragon. Yemi is familiar with the lair and can find her way around it; if Nakari is still alive, the dragon opens any secret door in Yemi's way.

Yemi's Story. In her twenties and thirties, Yemi belonged to a subversive group of musicians called the Key. They used their music to inspire rebellions in lands plagued by tyrants and religious zealots—and made many powerful enemies in doing so. Decades later, after an assassin killed Yemi's spouse Mertyl Swooney in pursuit of the maestro, Yemi sought out Nakari. Sympathetic to Yemi's plight, Nakari revealed her true draconic nature and, with the maestro's consent, used a *Spell Scroll* of *Sequester* to make it impossible for enemies to find Yemi. After a century in hiding, Yemi figures her old enemies are long gone, and she's ready to return to the world.

N13: Worm Cave

> A pillar of rock braces the roof of this dry cave, and the ground rumbles under your feet.

A **Purple Worm** has been drawn to Nakari's lair by the dragon's frequent excavation work. The worm bursts up through the floor of the cave when the characters arrive and attacks them. It retreats when it becomes Bloodied.

Breakaway Roof. Nakari has carefully weakened the roof of the cave so she can burrow through it quickly to reach the surface (see "Lair Features").

N14: Western Boulder Cave

> Several boulders are scattered about this dark, sunken cave. Slumped in a niche in the southwest corner is a dead gnome clutching a well-made pick.

This cave appears to hold nine boulders, but three are belligerent **Galeb Duhr** relaxing while rolled up. If they notice the characters, they arise and begin combat.

Dead Gnome. As a Search action, a character can examine the dead gnome and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a success, the character confirms that the gnome was battered to death roughly

JABARI WEATHERS

ten days ago. Characters who cast *Speak with Dead* on the corpse can learn the following information:

Gnome's Name. The gnome's name was Gleem Happenbolt.

Home. The gnome came from a mining settlement five miles north of the Rattle.

War Pick. The gnome's weapon is a family heirloom Gleem inherited from his uncle (see "Treasure" below).

What Happened. The gnome was searching the hills for gem deposits when he saw a copper dragon flying overhead. Believing the dragon to be friendly and thinking it might lead him to treasure, he followed it. The dragon led Gleem to this cave complex, but some of the boulders here "woke up" and tried to scare him away. When he wouldn't leave, they battered him to death.

Treasure. A search of the dead gnome yields an Explorer's Pack (with a full Waterskin) and a *+1 War Pick*. Characters also notice that the gnome's right boot has a pocket sewn into its side. The boot-pocket contains two topaz gemstones worth 500 GP each.

N15: Tunnel to the Dragon's Den

This tunnel is filled with laughing gas (see "Lair Features").

N16: Hidden Hoard

This cave is hidden behind a secret door (see "Lair Features"). If the characters attempt to break through or bypass this door, Nakari loudly invites them to join her in her den (area N17)—and begins combat with them if they refuse.

> A sloping tunnel leads down to a cave containing a mound of copper coins sprinkled with silver, gold, and platinum coins. Stacked neatly against the wall behind the hoard are several paintings and other art objects.

Lost Verses. Buried deep within the pile of coins is a ratty old notebook with a string tied around it. A character who spends 10 minutes searching through the coins finds the notebook.

Titled *Verses of the Awakening Song*, the notebook was written by a young man who identifies himself as Proclaimer Cirroc Coldwater, Acolyte of the Covenant. The book is valuable only to the residents of Godsbreath, for it contains lost verses of the *Awakening Song*. If the characters take it without Nakari's consent, the dragon does everything in her power to reclaim it.

Treasure. In addition to the notebook containing the *Awakening Song*, Nakari's hoard contains the following treasure:

500 PP, 10,000 GP, 55,000 SP, and 450,000 CP
Four framed masterpiece paintings of brass, bronze, copper, and gold dragons (worth 2,500 GP each) by the renowned dragonborn painter Zaemon Vedrak
Pearl-studded, clamshell-shaped music box (worth 750 GP)
Sending Stones
Talking Doll that resembles a baby copper dragon

N17: Nakari's Den

> This cave has exits to the west and east, and its walls are patterned to look like dragon scales. In the middle of the cave sits a great copper dragon. Two green dragon wyrmlings crawl over and around her, occasionally exhaling puffs of gas from their nostrils.
>
> At the sight of you, the wyrmlings hiss and bare their fangs. The copper dragon smiles and says, "Pay them no mind. It's me you must answer to."

The **Adult Copper Dragon** is Nakari. The two **Green Dragon Wyrmlings** are Retta and Rynn. A little over a month ago, Nakari found the wyrmlings in the Rattle and thought it best to adopt them before they harmed themselves or someone else. The orphans are Neutral; they have bonded with their adoptive mother and don't know what happened to their biological parents.

Roleplaying Nakari. Nakari is trying to teach the dragon wyrmlings to be kind toward others, so she adopts an Indifferent attitude toward the characters, even though she considers their intrusion unwelcome. Her attitude shifts to Hostile if one or more characters threaten the wyrmlings or disrespect her in her presence. Once her attitude shifts to Hostile, nothing the characters do from that point on can improve it.

Nakari doesn't like dealing with folk she doesn't know, and she distrusts anyone who professes to have noble intentions. She politely asks the characters to leave in peace and wishes them a safe journey home.

Nakari won't sell *Verses of the Awakening Song* for any price, despite paying only a single Copper Piece for it.

Fighting Nakari. If combat seems likely, Nakari sends the wyrmlings to their room (area N18), where they remain until she calls for them. If Yemi accompanies the characters (see area N12), Nakari won't do anything that might endanger her.

Breakaway Roof. Nakari has carefully weakened the roof of the cave so she can burrow through it quickly to reach the surface (see "Lair Features"). If battle erupts and the outcome seems likely to go against her, she breaks through the roof and orders the wyrmlings to flee by that route while she covers their escape.

Impressing Nakari. As an Influence action, a character can recite the lyrics to "Copper for a Song," tell a story, or play an instrument, and then make a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, Nakari becomes Friendly and loans the characters her copy of *Verses of the Awakening Song* (see area N16). The loan extends for up to 1 month, during which time the characters can have copies of the book made. If Yemi is with the party (see area N12), Nakari entrusts the book to her; the maestro promises to return it within the agreed-on time frame.

N18: Wyrmlings' Nursery

> A short, downward-sloping tunnel leads to a dead-end cave. Its floor is littered with copper dragon scales, torn bales of hay, and broken toys.

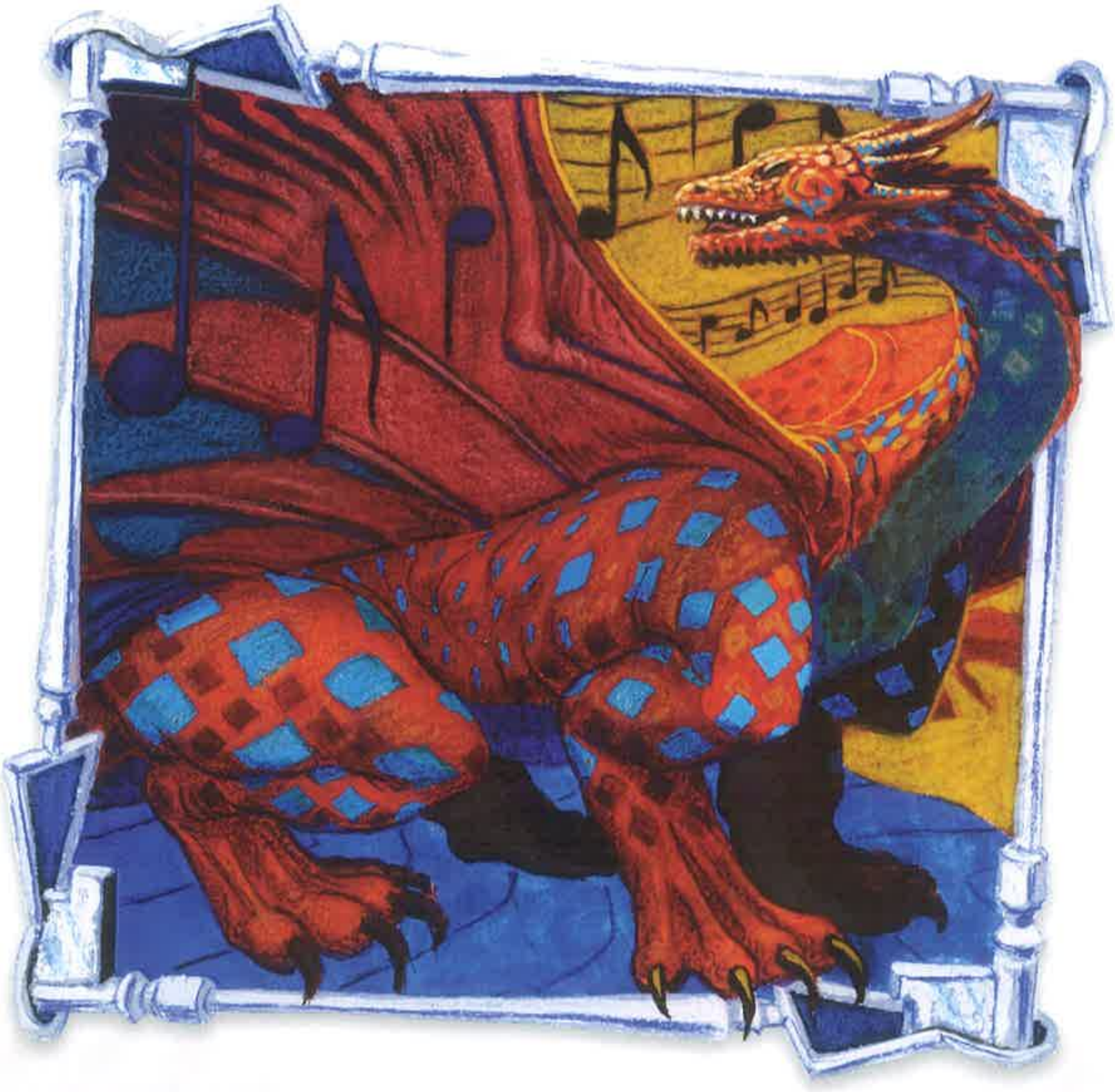
If present, the two **Green Dragon Wyrmlings** Retta and Rynn are quick to lash out at intruders in this cave. The wyrmlings surrender or flee if either of them becomes Bloodied.

Conclusion

Characters who obtain the lost verses of the *Awakening Song* can deliver the book safely to Proclaimer Tungsten Ward in Promise. Alternatively, they can accomplish their goal by escorting Yemi Moonsybil back to town. If either event comes to pass, word spreads quickly that the lost verses of the *Awakening Song* have been recovered.

The townsfolk share the lost verses widely, ensuring that they're never forgotten again. The verses' lyrics tell a story about a previous struggle with harvests. From the details of how the locals solved that problem, Godsbreath's people coax the land back to peak fertility.

Characters who parted with Nakari on good terms can revisit the copper dragon from time to time. She might loan them some useful magic items (such as the *Sending Stones* in her hoard) or hire them to complete a quest, such as finding out what happened to Rynn and Retta's parents.

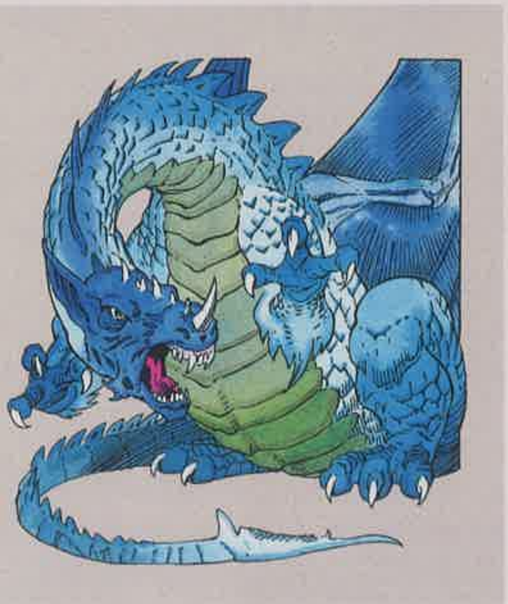


JABARI WEATHERS

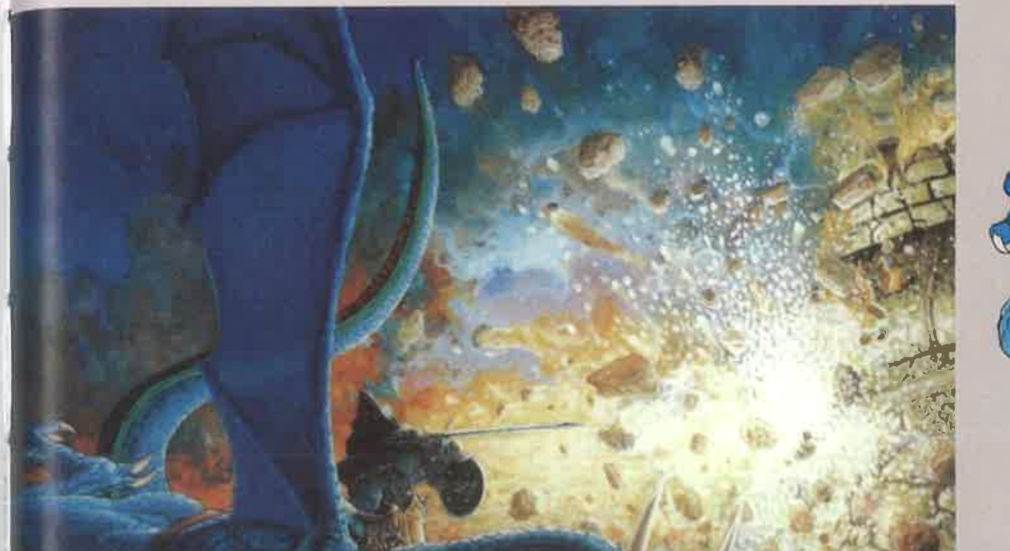
HISTORY OF

BLUE DRAGONS

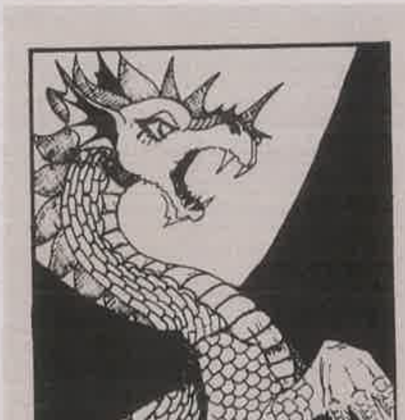
Like a lightning rod at the tip of the snout, a blue dragon's prominent nose horn appears in almost every iteration of this dragon's appearance over the years. Only in the Dragonlance depiction of the blue dragon Skie was the nose horn replaced with two great horns at the back of the head.



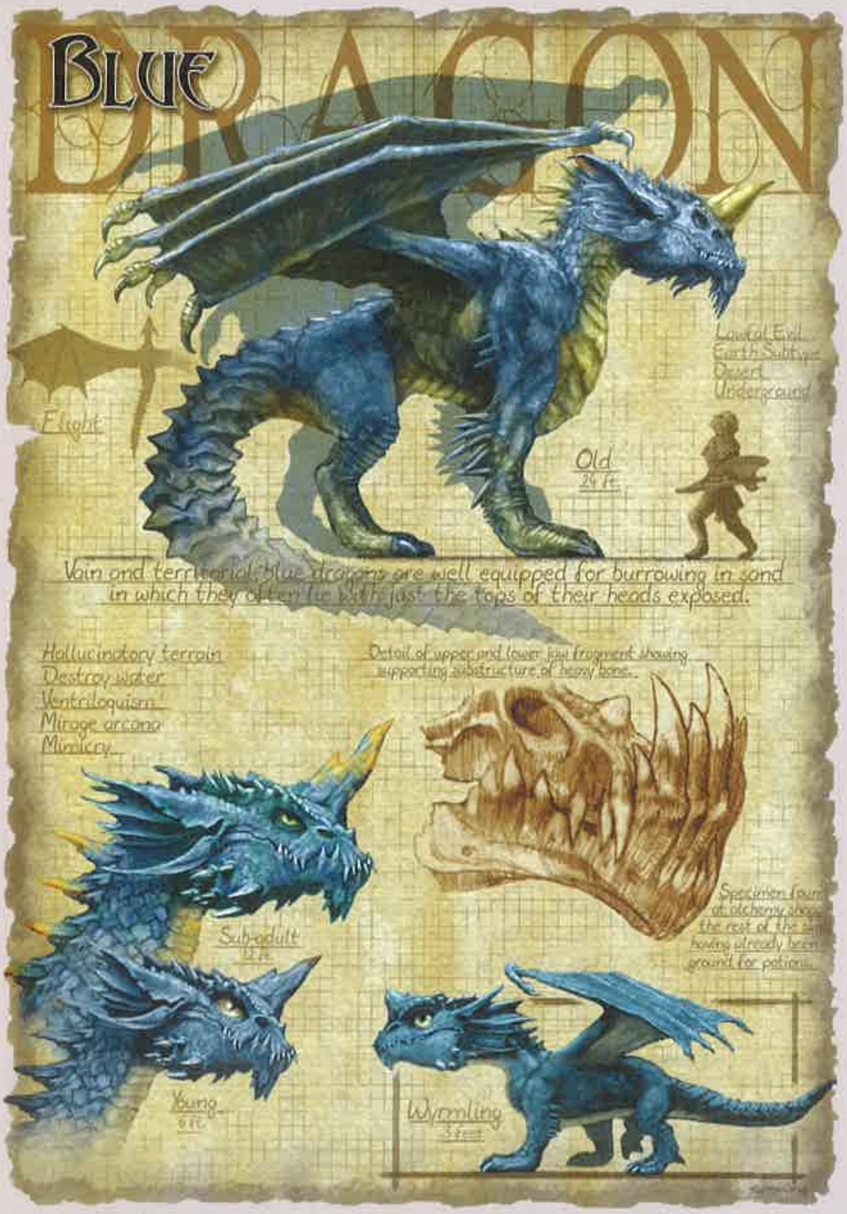
Monstrous Manual (1993)
Artist: Mark A. Nelson



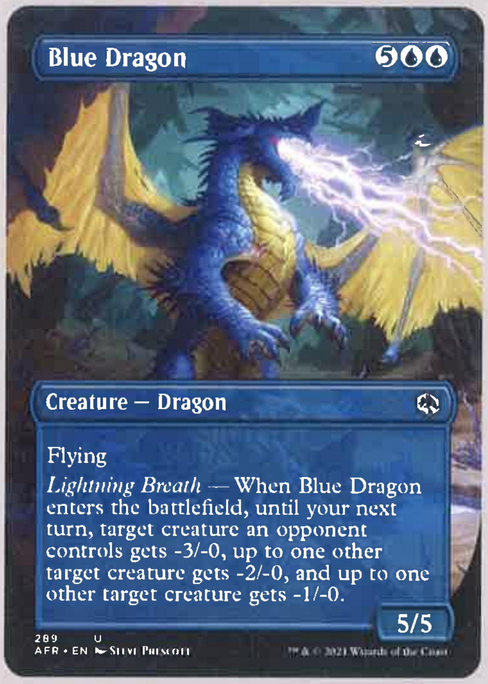
Dragons of War (1985)
Artist: Keith Parkinson



Monster Manual (1977)
Artist: David C. Sutherland


BLUE
DRAGON
Lawful Evil
Earth Subtype
Desert
Underground
Flight
Old
24 ft.
Vain and territorial, blue dragons are well equipped for burrowing in sand
in which they often lie with just the tops of their heads exposed.
Hallucinatory terrain
Destroy water
Ventriloquism
Mirage arcana
Mimicry
Detail of upper and lower jaw fragment showing
supporting substructure of heavy bone.
Specimen foun
of alchemy sho
the rest of the s
having already been
ground for potions.
Sub-adult
12 ft.
Young
6 ft.
Wyrmling
3 feet

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Richard Sardinha



Blue Dragon 5

Creature — Dragon

Flying

Lightning Breath — When Blue Dragon enters the battlefield, until your next turn, target creature an opponent controls gets -3/-0, up to one other target creature gets -2/-0, and up to one other target creature gets -1/-0.

5/5

289 U
AFR • EN Steve Prescott
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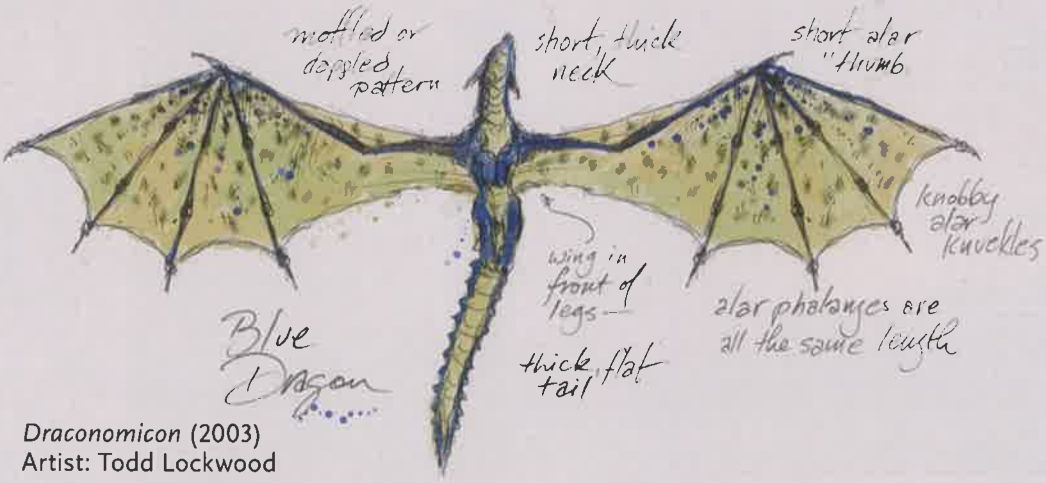
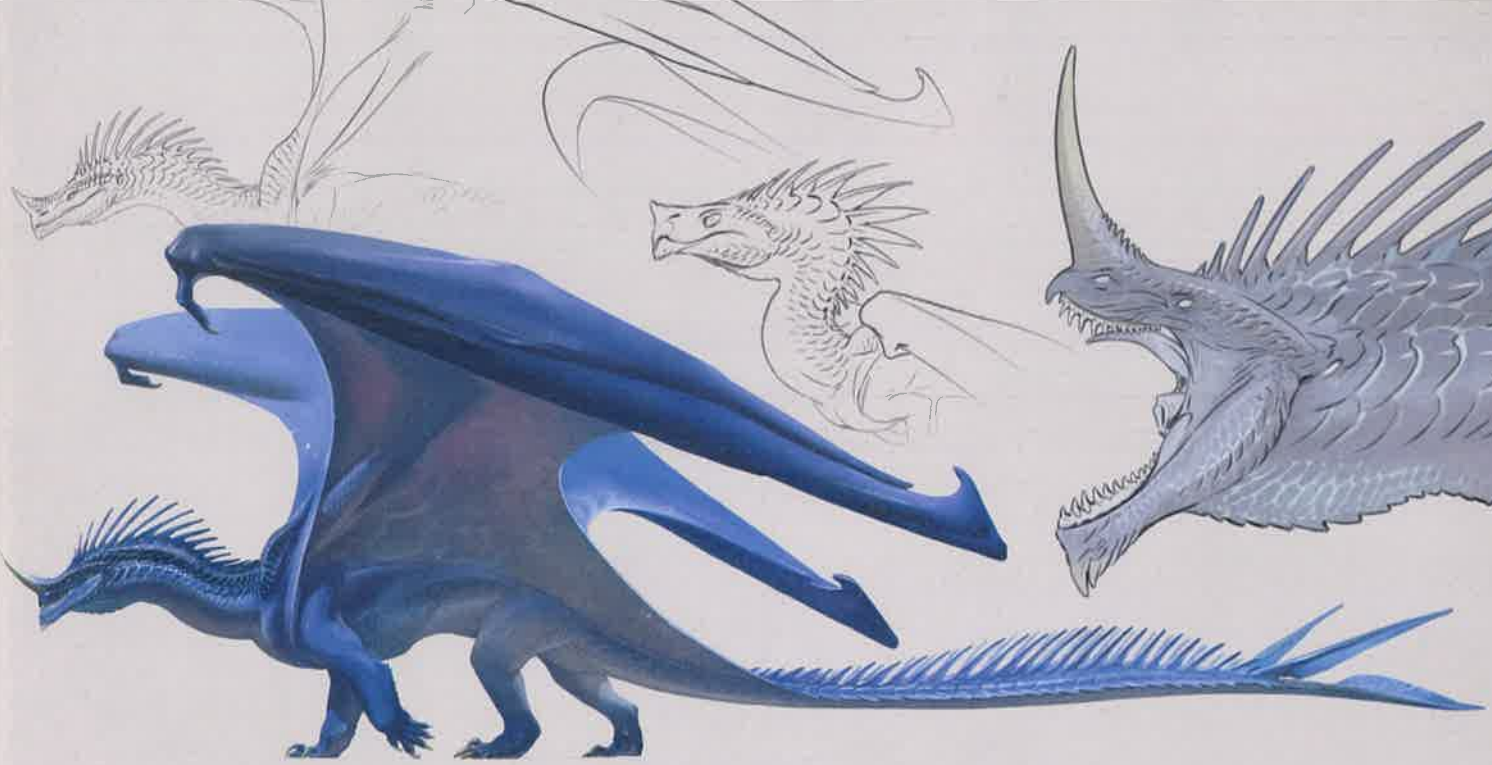
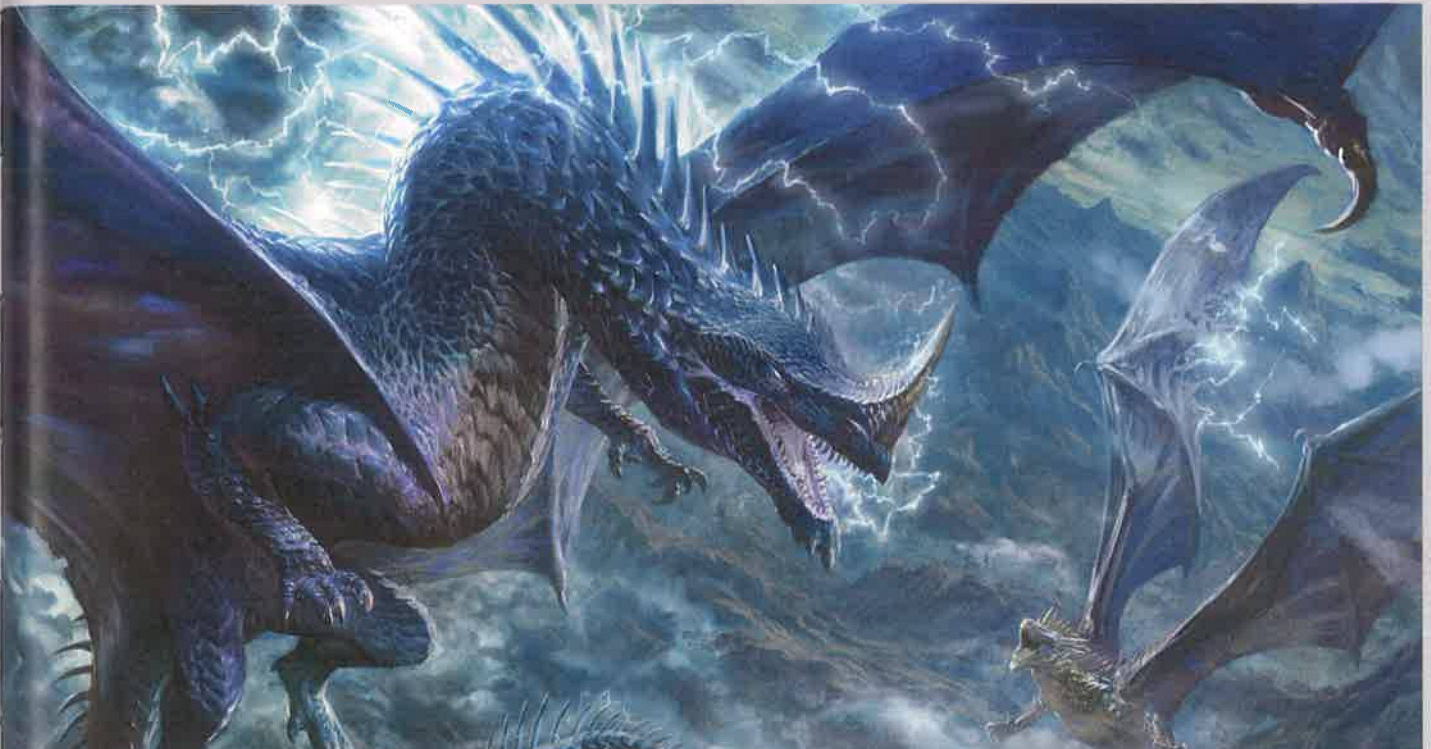
Adventures in the Forgotten Realms (2021)
Artist: Steve Prescott


mottled or dappled pattern
short, thick neck
short alar "thumb
knobby alar knuckles
wing in front of legs
alar phalanges are all the same length
thick, flat tail
Blue Dragon

Draconomicon (2003)
Artist: Todd Lockwood



Concept Art (2023)
Artist: Alexander Ostrowski



Monster Manual (2025)
Artist: Antonio José Manzanedo

CHAPTER 10

Dragons of the Sandstone City

AN ADVENTURE FOR
Level 12
CHARACTERS

THIS ADVENTURE IS DESIGNED TO FILL ONE OR TWO SESSIONS OF PLAY. IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN ANY COMMUNITY NEAR A DESERT OR SIMILARLY ARID REGION.

Key Plot Points

The following information is key to the adventure's story:

Brass Dragon Egg. In the ruined subterranean city of Haskasori, the blue dragon Anthradusk prepares a nefarious ritual. A woman approaches the adventurers to tell them of this dragon, who killed the city's brass dragon protector. The brass dragon's egg—which the woman gives to the party—holds the key to defeating Anthradusk.

Riddle for Help. The characters must persuade a local sphinx in her temple to reveal the passphrase that allows them to enter the ruined city.

Infiltrating Haskasori. As the characters explore the ruins of Haskasori, they discover its many denizens, including its former king. When Anthradusk returns to his lair, the characters can unleash the egg's strange magic in the presence of the brass dragon's remains to weaken Anthradusk. They must slay Anthradusk to end the threat posed by his foul ritual.

Preparation

Before running the adventure, prepare as follows:

Step 1. Read the "Adventure Background" section.

Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the Key NPCs table, which describes important individuals the characters will interact with during the adventure.

Step 3. Bookmark following stat blocks in the *Monster Manual* or on D&D Beyond:

Blue Dragon, Adult
Blue Dragon, Ancient
Bandit
Basilisk
Dao
Flameskull
Gargoyle
Mage
Mummy
Mummy Lord
Sphinx of Lore

KEY NPCs

Name	Role	Stat Block	Location
Anthradusk	Primary antagonist	**Ancient Blue Dragon**	"Anthradusk's Return"
Eldemere	Quest giver and human disciple of a dead brass dragon	**Mage** (Medium, Chaotic Good)	"Beginning the Adventure"
Oliekintara	Provides a required passphrase	**Sphinx of Lore**	"Temple of Sands"
Rummox	Anthradusk's companion	**Dao** (Neutral Evil)	H9
Yaarnak	Asks characters to retrieve his lost staff	**Mummy Lord** (Small)	H8

LEROY STEINMANN

Adventure Background

For generations, the blue dragon Anthradusk has wreaked terror on the land. Recently, the vicious wyrm slew his rival, the brass dragon Cozmioko, but not before the brass dragon revealed Anthradusk's plot to resurrect several terrifying blue dragon ancestors.

One of Cozmioko's disciples, a human mage named Eldemere, found the brass dragon's remains—along with a mysterious egg—in the ruined city of Haskasori. Eldemere now seeks heroes to return there and undermine Anthradusk's profane magical plot.

Beginning the Adventure

Start the adventure when the characters are traveling together in a city near a desert. The character with the highest Passive Perception score notices that the party is being followed.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

> A tall human woman with sandy brown hair and golden eyes has been following you for some time. The woman wears fine yellow robes and carries a large, linen-covered basket under one arm. She shifts her attention between you and whatever's in the basket. She looks like she's about to speak.
>
> Before she can, though, a young woman with her face partially covered by a scarf runs from a nearby alley. The scarf-wearing woman slaps the basket upward, sending it flying into the air. A second passerby catches the basket and tosses it to a third individual who's already running—darting in your direction.
>
> The woman in yellow shouts, "Stop! Thieves!"

Three human **Bandits** have robbed the woman in yellow. They're nimble but cowardly street thieves, and they don't want a fight. Fortunately for them, their victim seems too surprised to do anything but shout. The thief with the basket runs toward the characters, not perceiving them as a threat.

The characters can impede the thieves however they please, but here are a few likely methods:

Intimidate. A character can command the thief to halt. As an Influence action, the character makes a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check; the thief is Hostile toward the character. On a success, the thief apologizes, drops the basket, and flees.

Pilfer. A character can try to grab the basket, as a Utilize action, doing so with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. If the character grabs the basket, the thief lets go and keeps running.

Violence. A character can take an Attack or Magic action, targeting the thief with a weapon or spell. If the thief takes damage, they wail dramatically, drop the stolen basket, and try to flee.

During the commotion, the characters notice the contents of the basket: a brass-colored egg the size of a honeydew melon. Before they can ask about it, the woman in yellow introduces herself:

> "I am Eldemere, and I believe this," the woman says, indicating the egg, "belongs to you."

Meeting Eldemere

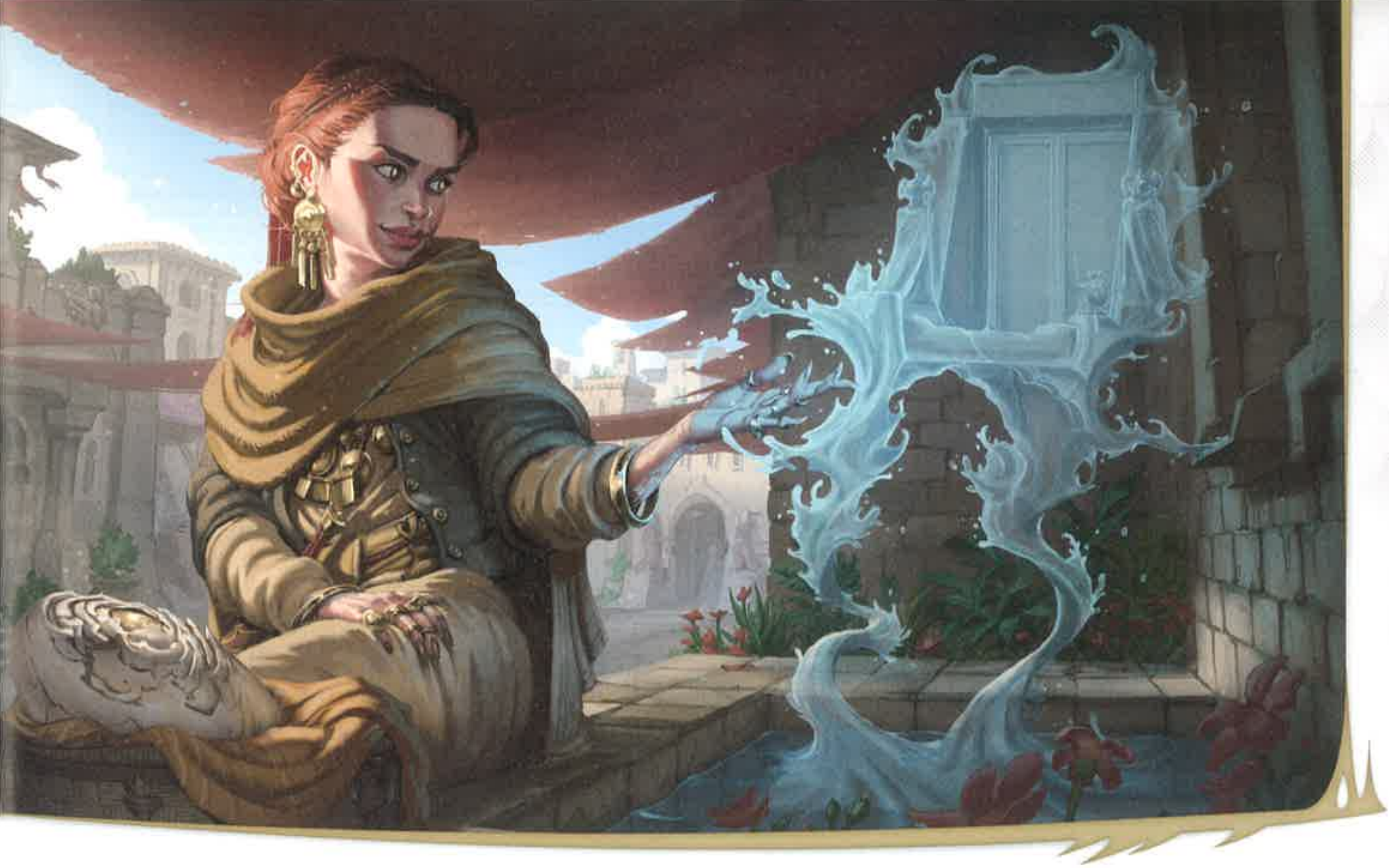
Eldemere is a Chaotic Good **Mage**. She is a scholar who seeks someone capable of helping her thwart the blue dragon Anthradusk's schemes using the egg in the basket, which she refers to as the Brazen Egg.

Eldemere was once a disciple of the brass dragon Cozmioko. When Cozmioko disappeared not long after revealing Anthradusk's evil plans, Eldemere began investigating. Eventually, she discovered the site where Anthradusk killed Cozmioko—and found the Brazen Egg among the brass dragon's ashes. Eldemere absconded with this egg before Anthradusk could find and destroy her.

Eldemere's Quest

When the egg is safe in its basket again, Eldemere explains the circumstances:

> "This," says Eldemere, gesturing toward the metal egg, "is the last gift of the great brass dragon Cozmioko. She was slain recently trying to defend this land from Anthradusk, a blue dragon who seeks to resurrect his ancestors: generations of blue dragons, each an architect of untold calamities. Cozmioko disappeared after warning me about Anthradusk's foul ambitions. I followed clues in her research to the ruins of Haskasori, the Sandstone City.
>
> "I found Cozmioko's remains there—she was slain by Anthradusk. I sifted this egg from her ashes, but Anthradusk returned before I could learn more about his plans. I barely escaped before he sealed and magically locked Haskasori's gates.



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> "My research has since convinced me this Brazen Egg holds a final gift from Cozmioko and a way to spoil Anthradusk's plans. To do so, you must return to Haskasori, release the egg's power to weaken Anthradusk, and then slay the dragon to stop his ritual. This is your destiny—indeed, the egg has led me to you."

Eldemere hands the characters the egg. She does whatever she can to convince them to go to Haskasori. If they are money-driven, she informs them that Haskasori was once a city of great riches and culture; they are welcome to keep any relics or treasure they find.

Eldemere can provide the following information:

How Can We Enter Haskasori? "Ancient magic seals the city gates, and few besides Cozmioko and Anthradusk are long-lived enough to remember the passphrase. However, I'm certain the sphinx Oliekintara knows how to enter. Seek her at the Temple of Sands and convince her to share what she knows. I can give you directions."

How Did the Egg Lead You to Us? "I've had the egg for weeks, and it has remained still. But as I approached you, it grew warm and started to twitch. It has settled down only now. I'm certain this is Cozmioko's will."

What Can You Tell Us about Anthradusk? "He's a tyrant who seeks to resurrect and bind his dead ancestor dragons, then use them to conquer the region. His depravities focus on Haskasori, which he's made his temporary lair. But he often leaves the city for long stretches as he collects foul reagents for his ritual."

What Can You Tell Us about Haskasori? Eldemere approaches a nearby well and scatters a scintillating powder across its surface. In response, the water rises, taking the shape of city ruins nestled inside a mountain. "Haskasori began as a cavern where desert travelers could take shelter, grew into a trade hub, and eventually expanded into an underground city of markets and temples. This happened over generations under Cozmioko's guidance. Eventually, though, the people grew greedy, and a ruler called Yaarnak turned the populace against the dragon. Cozmioko left; within a few short years, Haskasori fell to ruin."

Eldemere politely refuses to join the party if invited. Secretly she fears Anthradusk is looking for her, and she doesn't want to jeopardize the mission.

The Brazen Egg. The egg is indestructible and magical. It has no obvious powers, and the *Identify* spell gives no insight into its nature. The egg's true might awakens only when it is returned to Cozmioko's remains in Haskasori (see area H16).

Temple of Sands

To learn the passphrase that will grant them entry into Haskasori, the characters must seek the sphinx, Oliekintara, at the Temple of Sands, which is 12 miles away.

When the party arrives at the Temple of Sands, read or paraphrase the following description:

> A broad platform of dark stone tiles contrasts sharply with the bright desert sands. At the center of the tiles stands a massive sphinx statue carved from black stone. The statue's pyramidal head is like a triangular blade tipped toward the sky. Its shadow creeps across the stone courtyard, pointing like a sundial at runes engraved in the tiles.
>
> Lounging atop a dais in front of the sculpted sphinx is an actual sphinx, her silk scarves blowing around her in the breeze as she regards you with an inscrutable gaze.

Oliekintara (**Sphinx of Lore**) has watched over the Temple of Sands for centuries. Few except the bravest or most desperate seek the sphinx's advice, which she never gives freely. In conversation, Oliekintara is aloof and soft-spoken.

Sphinx's Riddle

Oliekintara confirms her identity to anyone who asks, but before she'll say more, she insists visitors answer this riddle:

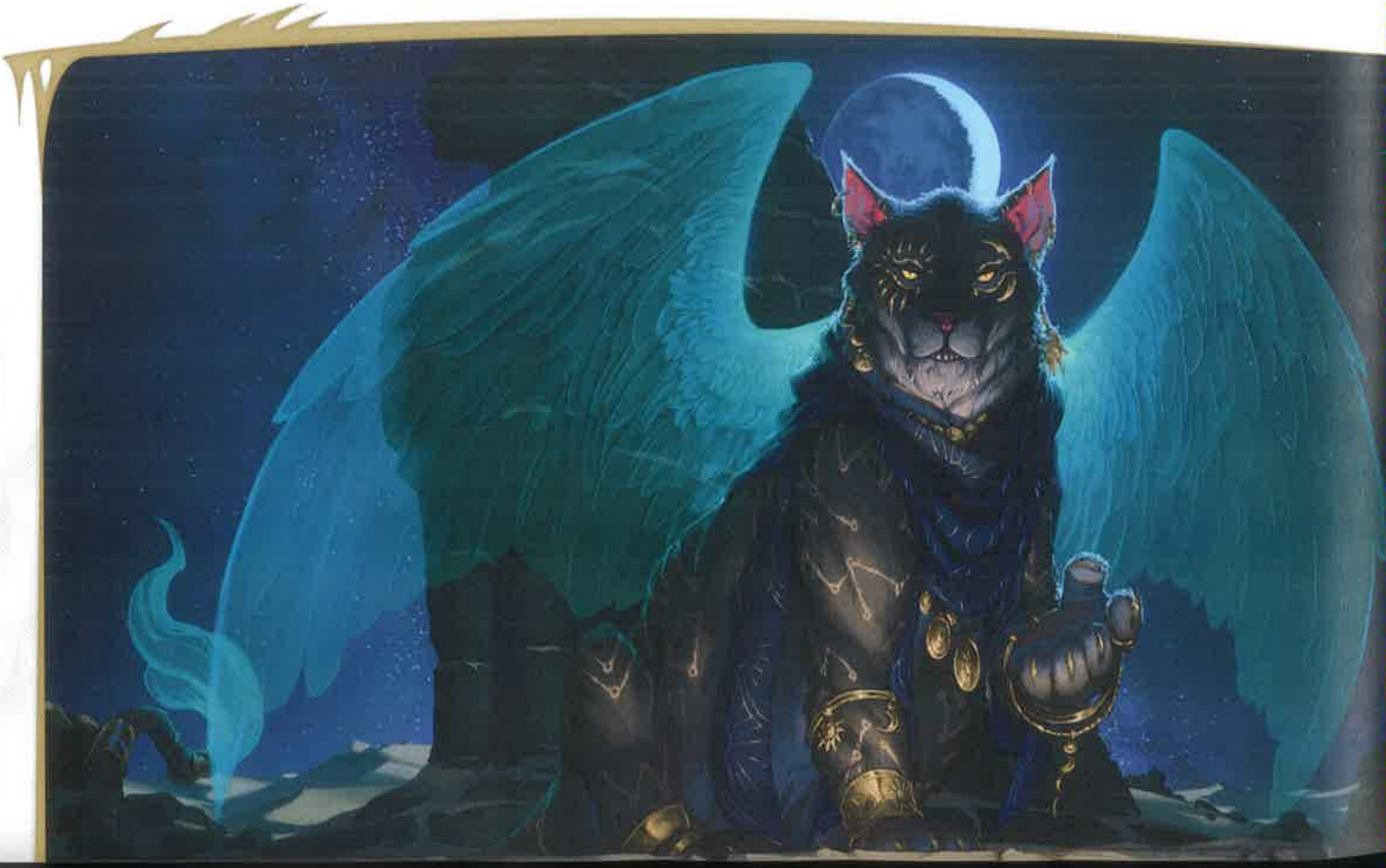
> You've come to meet me at my temple,
> And I'll give you all of it that you ask for.
> Yet no matter how much of it you take,
> You'll always leave with less than before.
> What is it?

The riddle's answer is "time." The characters can make as many guesses as they like. They can try to find clues with the following actions:

Search. A character can take the Search action and make a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check. On a success, the character notices that Oliekintara's scarves are covered in repeating, patterned processions of suns and moons, representing the passage of time; the character also notices that Oliekintara's eyes occasionally drift toward the sundial in the center of the temple.

Study. A character can take the Study action and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check. On a success, the character identifies twelve runes engraved around the sphinx statue. Each is an ancient symbol for a different hour.

If the characters fail to answer the riddle correctly, Oliekintara seems pleased with her own cleverness.



She offers to tell them what she knows in return for a gift. This can be anything the characters think a sphinx might like—perhaps a song, a story, a meal, a future visit—or treasure worth at least 300 GP. If they answer the riddle correctly, she makes the same offer without demanding a gift.

Passphrase. Oliekintara confirms that she knows how to enter Haskasori: one must stand before the gates and speak or sign the passphrase "Cozmioko grins" in any language.

Parting Gifts. Before the characters leave, Oliekintara gives them directions to Haskasori, a day's journey deeper into the desert. If they correctly answered her riddle and treated her respectfully, she also gives them a *Spell Scroll* of *Move Earth*.

Oliekintara also warns the characters that there might be more threats in Haskasori than Anthradusk. The sphinx has heard that the city's avaricious ruler, Yaarnak, still clings to his throne.

Haskasori

As the characters near Haskasori, read or paraphrase the following:

> Miles ahead, the sky darkens, and the desert sands suddenly rise in a sandstorm. A moment later, a gigantic, twilight-hued dragon bursts from the ominous storm. Each flap of its mighty wings disrupts the dunes below until the dragon vanishes deeper into the desert.

The dragon, Anthradusk, is miles from the party and flying away from both them and Haskasori. The dragon flies out of sight before the characters can interfere with him, and the distant sandstorm settles down within a few minutes. The dragon won't return until the adventure's climax, detailed in "Anthradusk's Return."

Soon after, the characters arrive at the sandstone butte that shelters Haskasori.

Haskasori Features

Unless otherwise specified, the ruins of Haskasori have the following features.

Amulets of Yaarnak

King Yaarnak's priests created ornamental jade amulets to mark the king's most loyal subjects. Each bears an eerie design with a mixture of goat and draconic features. The amulets are worth 250 GP each. One or more amulets of Yaarnak can be found in areas H7a, H7d, H8, and H12. They're not magical, but the statue in the sanctum (area H15) doesn't attempt to petrify a creature wearing a visible amulet of Yaarnak.

Ceilings

The cavern's rough natural ceilings are 50 feet high.

Doors

Haskasori's few doors are at the end of the bridge (area H2), at the entrance to the vault (area H8), and in the temple (area H14). These massive stone doors are sealed with powerful magic. The only way a creature can open a sealed door is by speaking or signing the passphrase "Cozmioko grins" in any language. Once opened, a door can't be resealed.

Illumination

Dim Light streaks into the southern part of Haskasori (areas H1–H3) from outside. Unless otherwise noted, the rest of the ruins are shrouded in Darkness. Descriptions assume characters have a way of seeing in the dark.

Lightning Crystals

Anthradusk's presence has caused crystal formations charged with lightning to grow throughout Haskasori. Each crystal formation is a Large object with AC 13; HP 60; and Immunity to Lightning, Poison, and Psychic damage.

When a crystal formation takes damage, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from that formation makes a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) Lightning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Haskasori Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 10.1.

H1: Entry

> The entry to Haskasori is a wide, cavernous archway carved into the base of a mountain. Inside the cave, shattered fragments of lavender crystal lie scattered about the feet of cracked and broken statues made of the same crystal. The statues depict panicked human, dwarf, and elf adventurers. From the western wall emerge formations of the same glassy crystal.
>
> A ramp and a pair of stairways descend to the northeast, while a broad passage opens to the east.

The six mostly broken statues are the remains of a band of adventurers who sought shade in this cave and ran afoul of the basilisks in the promenade (area H3). All six were transformed into lightning crystal (see "Haskasori features") and then killed as the basilisks ate parts of their Petrified prey.

Loud noise here alerts the **Basilisks** in area H3, which come to investigate.

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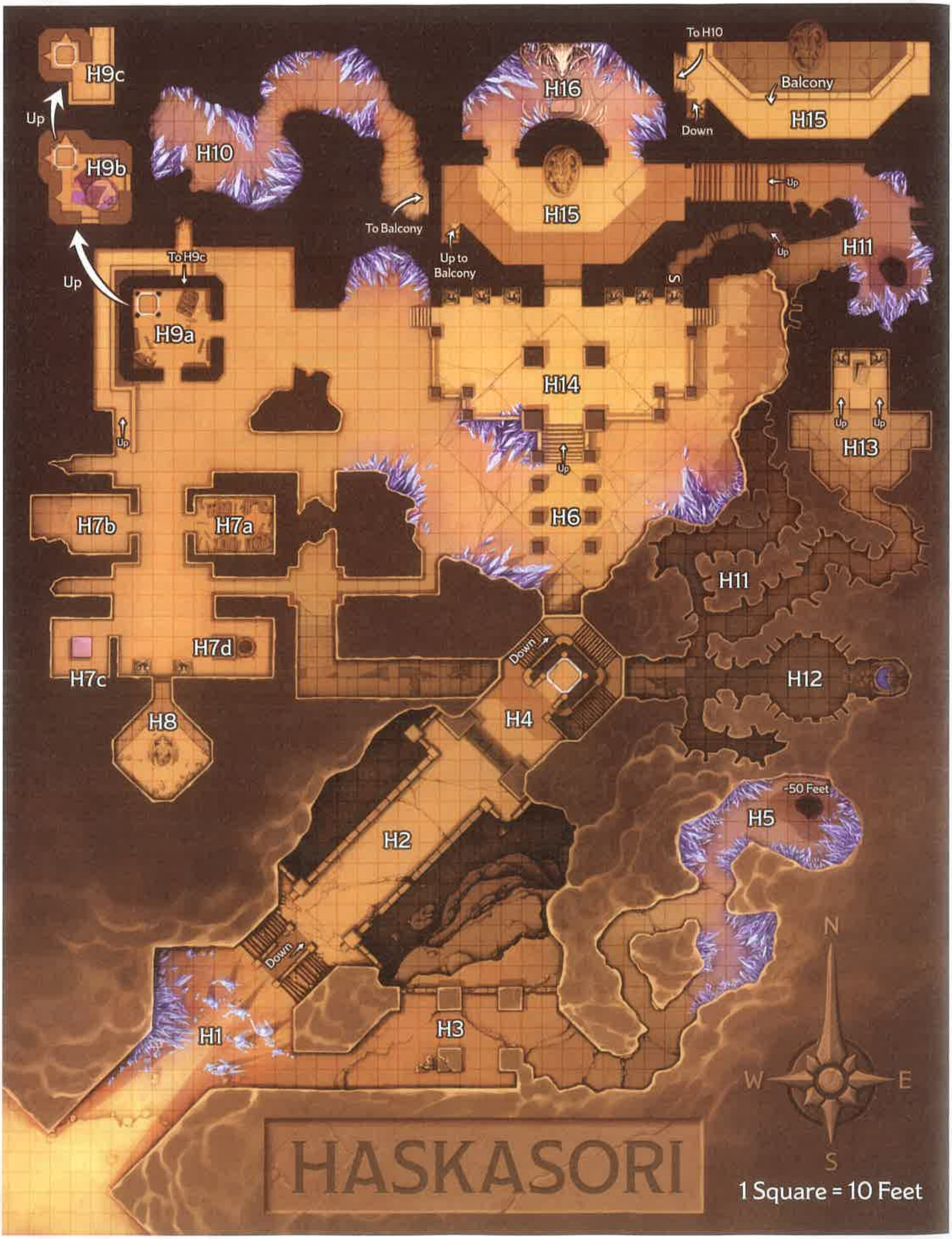
H9c
Up
H9b
Up
H10
H16
To H10
Balcony
Down
H15
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H11
To H9c
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S
H14
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H13
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H7b
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H6
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HASKASORI
1 Square = 10 Feet

Map 10.1: Haskasori

H2: Bridge

> This bridge spans a chasm that falls away into darkness. At the bridge's far end loom the gates of Haskasori—massive stone doors engraved with dragon-like figures.

The chasm floor lies 150 feet below the bridge. The chasm extends several hundred feet northwest and runs under the city's ruins, but it doesn't connect to anywhere else in Haskasori and terminates at a sandy dead end.

Unsealing the Gate. This gate is sealed with ancient magic and can be opened as described in "Haskasori Features."

H3: Promenade

> Wide openings in this promenade's north wall overlook Haskasori's stone bridge, the main gate, and a rocky outcropping that slopes into the chasm beneath the bridge.

Five **Basilisks** lounge in the tunnels between this promenade and the sinkhole to the east (area H5). If they notice anything in the promenade or the entry (area H1), the monsters scuttle out to ambush the characters. A creature that is given the Petrified condition by one of these basilisks turns into lightning crystal (see "Haskasori Features") instead of stone but can be restored as normal.

H4: Floating Platform

> In the center of this chamber floats a dimly glowing stone platform accessible by a short ramp. Gaps around the floating platform reveal a fifty-foot-deep shaft below. A stone staircase encircling the platform winds around the chamber and down the shaft.

As a Magic action, a creature on the floating platform or the adjacent ramp can prompt the platform to slowly descend or ascend 10 feet. The platform stops moving when it reaches the ramp at the top or bottom of the shaft.

At the bottom of the shaft, three wide tunnels offer paths to the ruins of Haskasori's homes and businesses (west; areas H7–H9), to the Pillars of Haskasori (north; area H6), and to the city's catacombs (east; areas H11–13), respectively.

H5: Sinkhole

> Massive crystal formations line the walls of this small cave network. Where the caves end, a sinkhole in the rock floor plunges fifty feet. At the bottom of the pit is a sandy grotto no wider than the sinkhole itself.

The crystal formations are lightning crystals (see "Haskasori Features"). The loamy sand at the bottom of the sinkhole connects to a massive layer of sand that extends in all directions beneath Haskasori's rocky foundation. Anthradusk burrows through the sandy substratum here to circumvent the sealed main gate. The dragon emerges at a similar sinkhole approximately 250 feet to the north, in Haskasori's catacombs (area H11).

H6: Pillars of Haskasori

> Two rows of pillars line the walkway toward a large subterranean temple at the north end of this spacious cavern. Imposing statues of winged figures that combine human and draconic features stand in front of the four southernmost pillars. Massive crystal formations dot the walls. To the west, tunnels lead to other parts of the sandstone city.

The crystal formations are lightning crystals (see "Haskasori Features"). The four statues are **Gargoyles**, which serve the genie in the tower (area H9). They fight to the death if provoked to combat; if left undisturbed, they instead slip away to warn their boss of the intruders.

H7: City Ruins

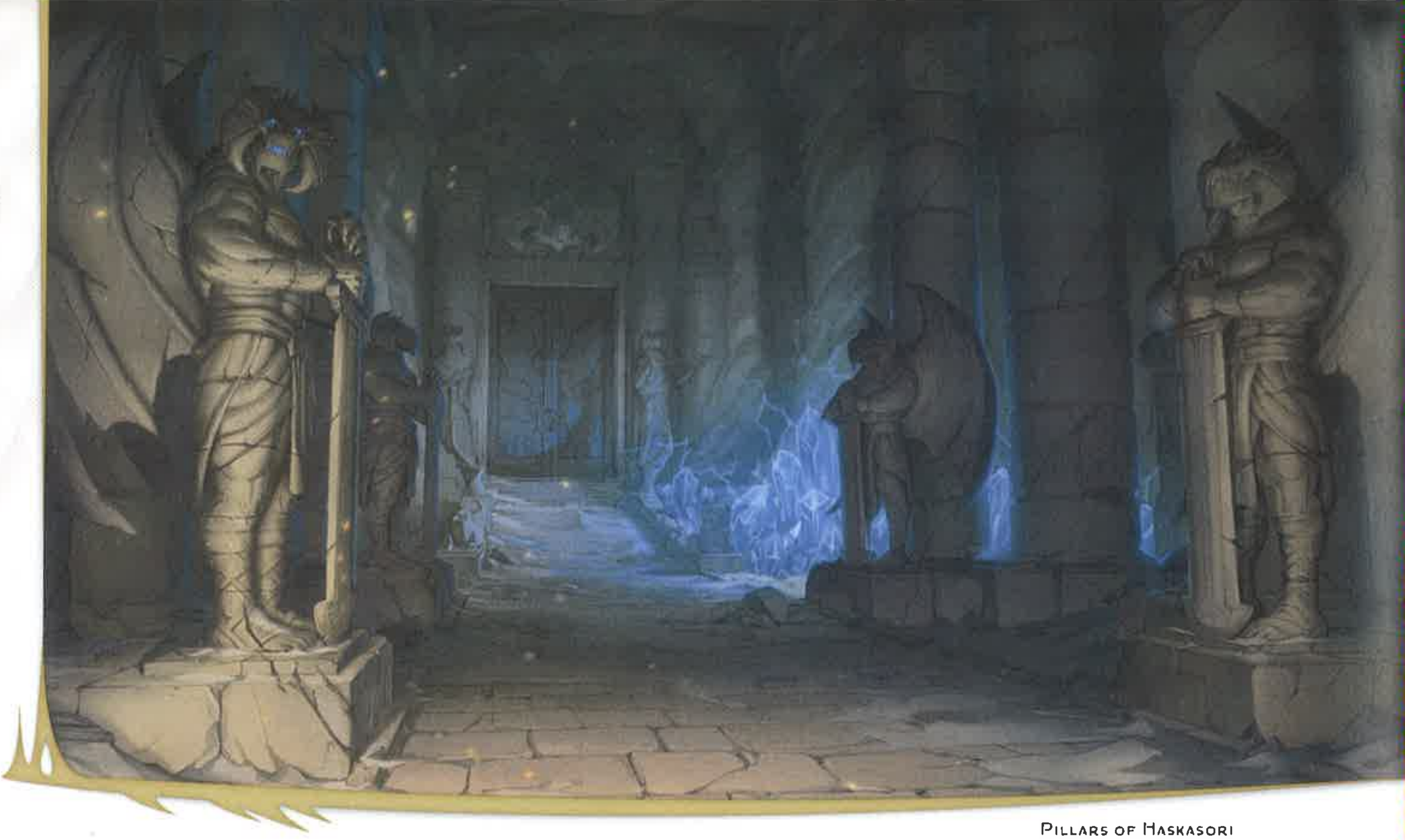
These chambers were once workplaces and abodes used by Haskasori's people. The tunnels in the western wall, which used to connect to many more chambers, caved in long ago.

H7a: High Priests' Quarters. Two amulets of Yaarnak (see "Haskasori Features") can be found among this chamber's sparse stone furnishings.

H7b: Dormitory. No obvious treasure remains in this crumbling chamber. Characters looking for relics of Haskasori to claim and sell can find mundane tools and records here (see "Conclusion" for details).

H7c: City Sculpture. In the center of this chamber stands an immovable 10-foot cube of pink sandstone. The cube's top face has been carved into a miniature sculpture of the butte-like mountain housing Haskasori. Characters who examine the sculpture notice animated sandstone birds and

COUPLEOFBOOKS



Pillars of Haskasori

goats roaming around; occasionally a majestic brass dragon soars over the scene. This sculpture is a magically animated model depicting Haskasori during its heyday. As a Search action, a character can study the sculpture and make a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the character realizes the model depicts this area in the past, not the current day.

H7d: Well. As a Search action, a character can peer down this dried-up, 30-foot-deep well and make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character spots a green stone amulet of Yaarnak (see "Haskasori Features") at the bottom of the well.

H8: Vault

The cracked stone door to this chamber is sealed like the other doors in the city (see "Haskasori Features").

> Pieces of colorful pottery lie broken along the walls of this octagonal chamber. All that remains intact is a three-foot-high sandstone altar. Atop it sits a ceramic figure of a baleful half-goat, half-dragon creature. A cloud of black dust swirls around the statue.

This chamber is a memorial to Haskasori's final ruler, Yaarnak. The ruler's body isn't interred here, though; his corpse rests in a separate tomb (area H13). The statue depicts Yaarnak's bizarre emblem of rule: a corruption of a brass dragon with "wise" goat features.

Hear the Voice of Yaarnak. Soon after the characters enter the room, they hear a hissing voice:

> "Return my scepter to its rightful place," an imperious voice demands, "or face my wrath!" The black dust coalesces into the lanky shape of an emaciated halfling, rotting bandages and brass chains covering his decaying flesh. A proud, sinister grin stretches across his withered face.

The dust forms into Yaarnak, a Small **Mummy Lord**. Yaarnak wants his staff recovered from the dragon's den (area H10) and returned to his tomb (area H13). If the characters do so, Yaarnak is appeased and vanishes; award the characters Experience Points for having defeated the mummy. If they try to leave Haskasori without returning the staff, the mummy pursues them and fights until destroyed.

Mummy Lord's Heart. The statue here is a Small object with AC 13, HP 10, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. Within lies Yaarnak's shriveled heart.

Treasure. The brass chains wrapped around Yaarnak's body are worth 800 GP total. Any character who sifts through the broken jars and succeeds on a

DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers an amulet of Yaarnak (see "Haskasori Features").

H9: Genie's Tower

> This wide sandstone tower is divided into three levels, the uppermost being a rooftop about twenty feet below the cavern's fifty-foot-high ceiling. A ramp outside the tower leads from the ground to the rooftop.

Each floor of the tower is a single area. A magical floating platform just like the one in area H4 connects the three levels.

Rummox. Anthradusk's genie companion, Rummox (Neutral Evil **Dao**), dwells in this opulent tower. She ostensibly keeps a lookout for intruders, but in reality she spends most of her time studying ancient texts and plotting her betrayal of Anthradusk. She is Indifferent toward the characters.

If Rummox was not alerted to the characters' arrival, she is in her bedchamber (area H9b). In this case, she has no interest in fighting them and immediately surrenders. See "Traitorous Adviser" for details about interacting with her.

Forewarned! If the gargoyles in area H6 alert Rummox to the party's presence, the genie and all four **Gargoyles** keep watch from the rooftop (area H9c). If they notice the party's approach, they descend to intercept the characters before the characters enter the tower. Rummox makes a half-hearted attempt to drive the characters off, but she surrenders if she becomes Bloodied. A character can also take an Influence action and make a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check to urge Rummox to surrender and cooperate with them. See "Traitorous Adviser" if she surrenders.

H9a: Library. The tower's ground floor is stocked with precious texts. The entire collection, which includes over 200 tomes and even more scrolls, is worth 5,000 GP. A character who spends 15 minutes perusing the library finds two *Spell Scrolls* of *Greater Restoration*. Characters looking for relics of Haskasori to sell can find various interesting histories here (see "Conclusion" for details).

H9b: Bedchamber. Ornate rugs, fine sculptures, and supple silks fill this opulent private chamber. As a Search action, a character can search the room and make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character finds an *Efreeti Bottle* inside a secret cubbyhole in one of the walls.

H9c: Rooftop. Protruding from the ramp connecting to the northern section of this roof, a stone bridge leads to a caved-in tunnel. It once connected to what is now the dragon's den (area H10). Rubble obstructs the tunnel. As a Study action, a character can examine the rubble and make a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Characters with Tremorsense have Advantage on the check. On a success, the character determines the rubble is about 10 feet thick, and that excavating the rocks by hand would take about 1 hour.

Traitorous Adviser. Should Rummox surrender, she answers questions about the following topics:

Anthradusk. The ancient blue dragon created a den (area H10) attached to the temple sanctum (area H15). A tunnel just north of the genie's tower once led directly to this den, but Anthradusk collapsed part of it. Most of the tunnel remains, though, and it isn't blocked by much rock.

Basilisk Statue. The statue in the temple sanctum petrifies those it gazes on. The statue won't petrify those wearing an amulet of Yaarnak, though (see "Haskasori Features").

Yaarnak. The city's former ruler, Yaarnak, lurks in the ruins to the south (area H8). Anthradusk stole the mummy lord's staff and keeps it in his den (area H10), which is accessible from the balcony over the temple sanctum.

Though Rummox intends to betray Anthradusk, she refuses to fight the dragon alongside the party and avoids revealing her traitorous plans.

H10: Anthradusk's Den

This area can be accessed from the upper level of the sanctum (area H15). It once connected to the genie's tower (area H9c).

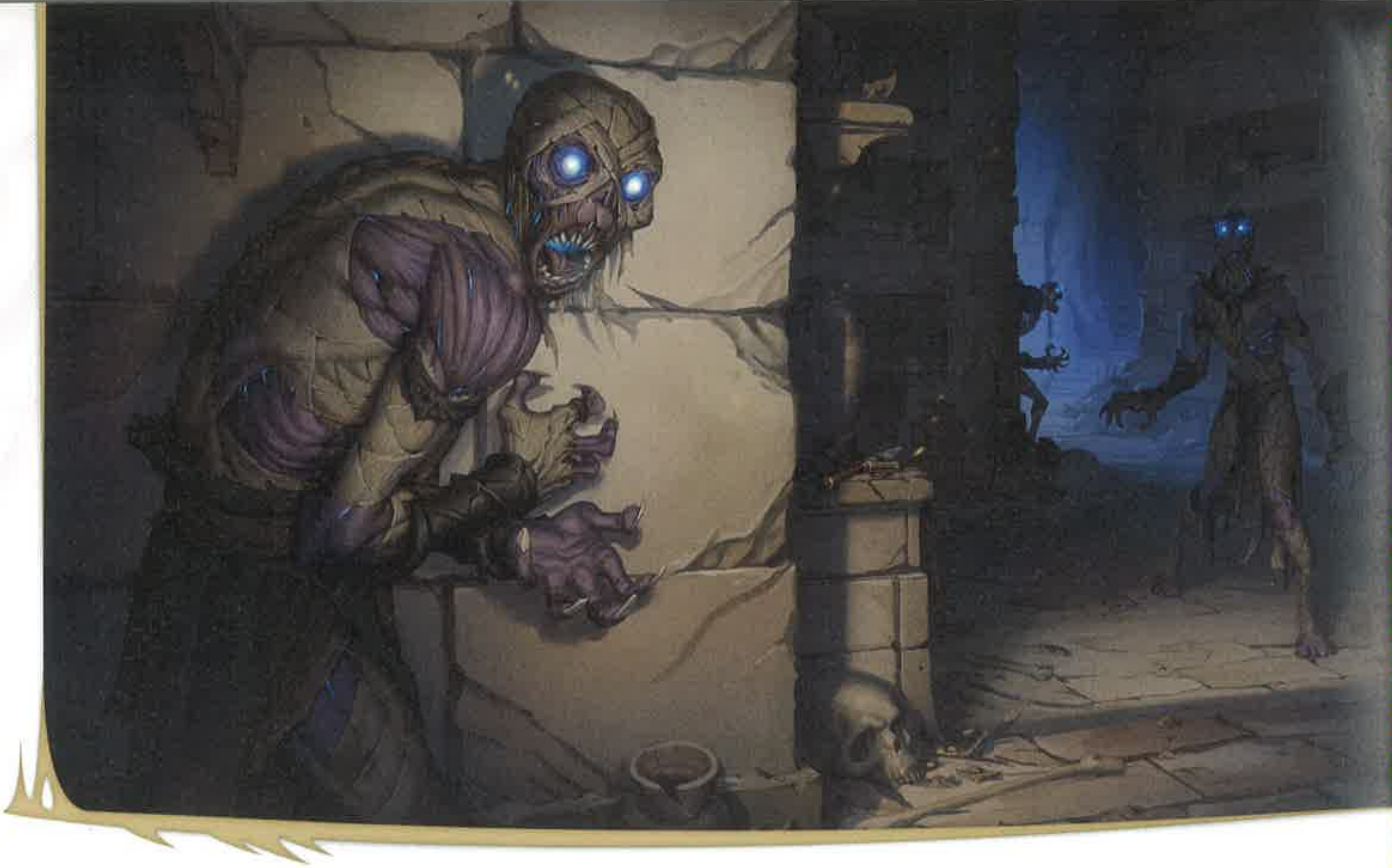
> Massive crystal formations fill this broad cavern's nooks and niches. A particularly massive formation to the south holds an ornate shape inside.

The crystal formations here are lightning crystals (see "Haskasori Features").

Yaarnak's Scepter. A character who studies the massive crystal formation notices a rod-shaped item encased within. Breaking the crystal formation frees a bone scepter wrapped in the scaly hide of a blue dragon. This is a *Rod of Rulership*, the scepter Yaarnak covets (see area H8).

H11: Catacombs

> Alcoves of all shapes and sizes line these musty halls. Some nooks are wide shelves holding scraps of linen and broken bones, while other recesses bear shards of pottery and scattered ashes. Shuffling footsteps echo in the tunnels.



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Eight **Mummies** are scattered throughout these catacombs. These guardians are Hostile toward all non-Undead. Once they were loyal guards of King Yaarnak. When Anthradusk took the scepter from the king's tomb, the guards roused from their slumber to search for the villain who defiled their master's grave. When the characters enter combat with one mummy, roll 1d6 to determine how many more mummies arrive on the scene at the start of the second round of combat. The rest arrive at the start of round 3.

Dead-End Stairs. Near the north end of the tunnel, stairs curve west through a rough-hewn passage and then end in a wall of worked stone. As a Search action, a character can search the wall and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character notices a button worked into the stone. Pressing the button causes the wall to slide away, revealing a passage through the base of a statue into the temple (area H14).

Relics. Characters looking for relics of Haskasori to sell can find varied burial items here (see "Conclusion" for details).

Lightning Crystals. In the northern part of this area, massive lightning crystal formations dot the walls (see "Haskasori Features").

Sinkhole. The sinkhole Anthradusk uses to enter the ruined city lies in the northern section of catacombs; it's just like the one in area H5.

H12: Shrine

> A sandstone statue stands at the end of this finely hewn catacomb chamber. The statue depicts a sphinx holding a quarterstaff. Around the statue is a stone font filled with crystal-clear water.

Any creature that approaches the statue notices an amulet of Yaarnak at the bottom of the font (see "Haskasori Features").

Crystallizing Water. Anthradusk's presence has tainted the once-restorative magic of this font. Any creature that touches the water must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or have the Petrified condition and be turned into lightning crystal (see "Haskasori Features").

Treasure. As a Search action, a character can examine the statue's quarterstaff and make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character finds a *Potion of Longevity* hidden inside the hollow staff's false bottom.

H13: King's Tomb

> Stone statues of monstrous bipeds stand in the far corners of this tomb, backlit by eerie firelight. The ornate sarcophagus at the raised head of the chamber lies in disarray, its lid removed and carelessly tipped to the side.

Six **Flameskulls** lurk behind the stone statues in the far corners of this tomb. They are Friendly toward a creature holding Yaarnak's scepter (and that creature's allies); they fight all other creatures.

Returning the Scepter. If a character returns Yaarnak's scepter (see area H10) to the sarcophagus here, the skulls guarding the chamber die and clatter to the floor. The sarcophagus's heavy lid slowly closes, and a bone-rattling sigh echoes throughout Haskasori as Yaarnak's spirit is put to rest. So long as the scepter remains in the sarcophagus, Yaarnak ceases to haunt the city.

H14: Temple

> Six twenty-foot-tall statues of dragon-headed humanoids fill the alcoves along this temple's northern wall. The statues flank a pair of massive stone doors. Floor-to-ceiling pillars connected by low stone railings separate the raised temple floor from the rest of the underground city.

As a Search action, a character can investigate the easternmost statue and make a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, the character notices a button hidden along the base. Pressing the button causes the statue's lower half to shift aside, revealing a secret passage leading to the north end of the catacombs (area H11).

Sanctum Doors. The magically sealed doors to the sanctum (area H15) can be opened as detailed in "Haskasori Features."

H15: Sanctum

> A statue of a monstrous, basilisk-headed figure presides over this sanctum. The statue's eyes glow bright green, casting the entire room in an eerie light.

The statue's glowing eyes emit Bright Light in a 30-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 30 feet.

Petrifying Statue. When a creature not wearing an amulet of Yaarnak (see "Haskasori Features") enters the statue's area of Bright Light for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, the creature makes a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to crystal, has the Restrained condition, and repeats the save at the end of its next turn. On a second failed save, the creature has the Petrified condition until freed by the *Greater Restoration* spell or other magic. On a successful save, the effect ends. A creature Petrified by the statue turns into lightning crystal (detailed in "Haskasori Features").

Balcony. A staircase in the southwest corner connects to a balcony that overlooks the sanctum's ground floor. A tunnel leads west from the balcony to the dragon's den (area H10).

H16: Hoard

> Mounds of coins and valuable treasures lie heaped in the center of this chamber, and crystal formations line its walls. The treasures' magnificence is eclipsed, however, by the macabre scene all around.
>
> The bones and hide of a brass dragon are arranged throughout the southern part of the chamber to emphasize a black stone altar along the southern wall. Mounted to the wall opposite the altar hangs an incomplete skeletal effigy of a different, far more terrifying dragon. Its bones are studded with brilliant blue gemstones.

In this defiled sanctuary, Anthradusk displays the bones of one of his ancestors along with Cozmioko's remains. The crystal formations are lightning crystals (see "Haskasori Features").

Empowering the Egg. If the characters bring the Brazen Egg into this area, it begins shedding a faint, warm light. The egg grows warm to the touch and cracks open, revealing a faintly pulsing light within. The characters can't open the egg more, and they don't have an opportunity to investigate much further, as a thunderous noise shakes the ruins. Proceed to "Anthradusk's Return" once the characters take any items from the treasure hoard.

Treasure Hoard. The treasure here contains the following valuable items:

49,000 GP
Eight gems—two aquamarines, four black pearls, and two topazes (worth 500 GP each)
Three flawless vases (worth 750 GP each)
Animated Shield
Potion of Invisibility
Potion of Speed

Anthradusk's Return

When Anthradusk returns to Haskasori, read or paraphrase the following text:

> A mighty boom shakes the ruins and unleashes a rain of settling sand. Heavy steps echo through the halls. Something huge draws near.

Anthradusk has returned with the final items necessary to complete his ritual. The dragon enters the city via the sinkhole in the catacombs (area H11) and heads to his ritual chamber (area H16). Characters in area H15 or H16 have 1 minute to prepare before the dragon appears.

Anthradusk grows enraged at the sight of intruders and fights to the death. Unless weakened (see "Using the Brazen Egg" below), he uses the **Ancient Blue Dragon** stat block. The dragon is too preoccupied with his ritual to pursue characters who flee.

Using the Brazen Egg

A character holding the cracked-open Brazen Egg while within 60 feet of Anthradusk can take a Magic action to unleash Cozmioko's lingering power. If they do so, read the following:

> The Brazen Egg shatters! Amber light pours from the broken shell and washes over everyone and everything nearby. The burning light sears Anthradusk's scales and causes the dragon to howl in agony. For you, however, the warm light feels invigorating.
>
> When the light subsides, Anthradusk still stands, but smaller and paler than before, and his body sizzles from horn to tail.

The Brazen Egg's magic weakens Anthradusk and empowers the characters. This has the following effects:

Supernatural Charm. Each character who helped bring the Brazen Egg to Haskasori gains the *Charm of Cozmioko's Glory*, described below. See "Supernatural Gifts" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

Weakened Dragon. Anthradusk's Hit Points are reduced by 200. For the next 24 hours, replace Anthradusk's game statistics other than his Hit Points, Initiative bonus, and Initiative score with those of an **Adult Blue Dragon**.

Charm of Cozmioko's Glory

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

This charm infuses you with the righteous vengeance of the brass dragon Cozmioko. You can use it as a Magic action and choose one of the following effects:

Cozmioko's Fire. You cast the *Wall of Fire* spell (level 7 version, spell save DC 20), requiring no spell components.

Cozmioko's Light. You regain 28 (8d6) Hit Points.

Cozmioko's Revenge. One Melee weapon you are holding is infused with supernatural might for 1 minute or until you aren't holding the weapon. Once per turn, when you hit a Dragon with this weapon, the Dragon takes an extra 3d6 damage of the weapon's type.

Once you use the charm, it vanishes from you.

Conclusion

If the characters defeat Anthradusk and return to Eldemere, she commends them for their bravery—thanking them on both her own behalf and Cozmioko's. She's certain the brass dragon is now at peace.

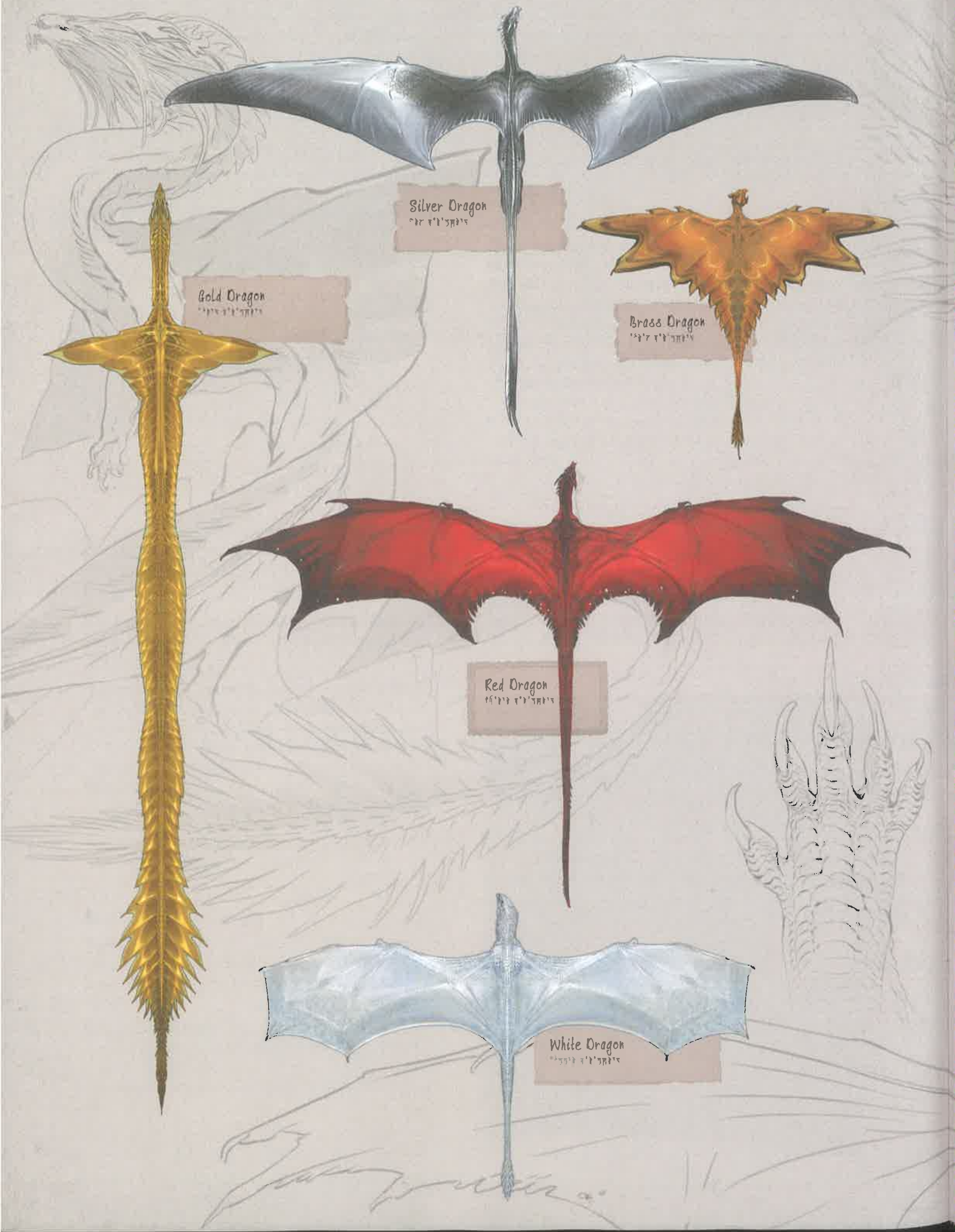
If the characters bring back any relics from Haskasori, Eldemere directs them to buyers. Regardless of what or how much the party returns with, these antiquarians pay an amount equal to the number of characters times 1,200 GP.

Eldemere tells the characters that if she ever has need of able explorers and dragon slayers, she'll call on them again. The mysterious scholar vanishes soon after.

Failure

If the characters fail to defeat Anthradusk, the blue dragon completes his ritual, and several **Ancient Blue Dragons** appear at Anthradusk's side. Under their resurrector's command, the dragons terrorize and subjugate the region. The exact details of what happens are up to you, but your players should understand that the cost of failure is high indeed!

LEROY STEINMANN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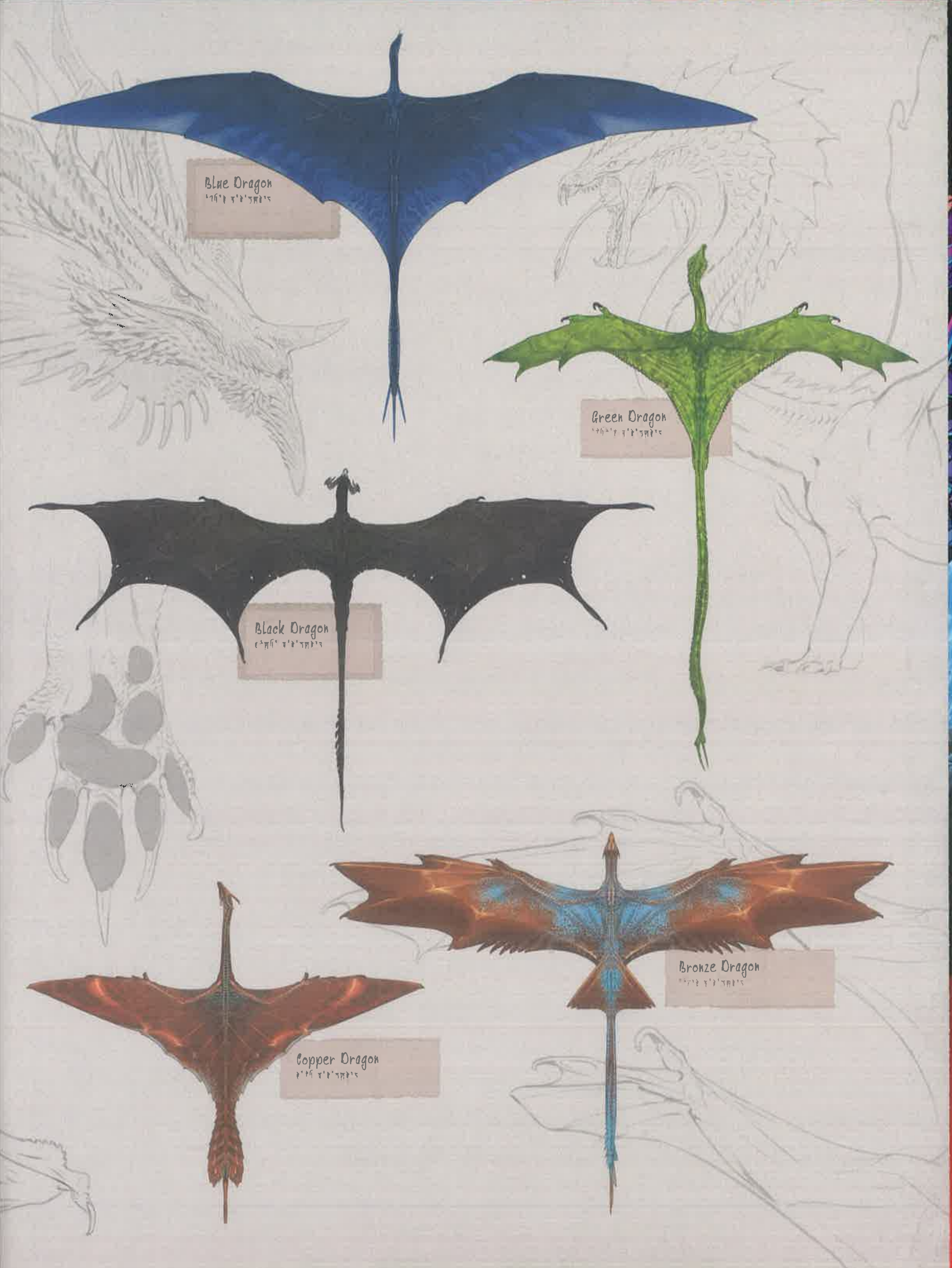
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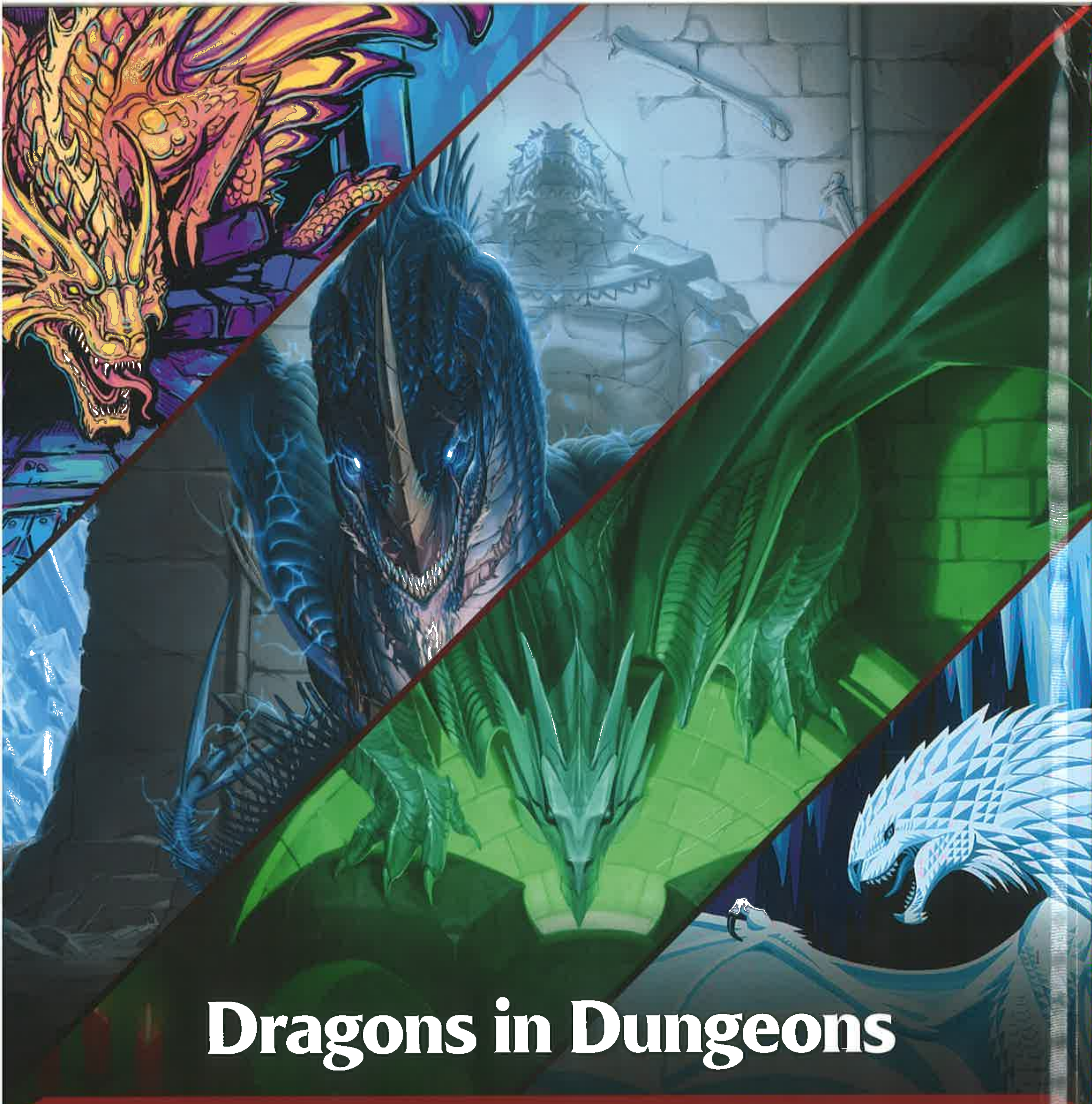

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